THE GAME BOY ENCYCLOPEDIA

EVERY GAME RELEASED FOR THE NINTENDO GAME BOY AND GAME BOY COLOR

INCLUDES EVERY GAME BOY COLOR GAME

CHRIS SCULLION

THE UNOFFICIAL GUIDE

THE
Game Boy
ENCYCLOPEDIA

Every Game Released for the Nintendo Game Boy and Game Boy Color

CHRIS SCULLION

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To Mum, the Tetris Master of the household, and to Dad, the poor guy who had to put up with being regularly beaten at Game Boy Link Cable battles for so long. You both made it clear to me that my love for video games wasn't something you were worried about: instead you actively encouraged it and I'll always be grateful for that because it shaped my career and my life.

To my wee brother Kevin, the only person who ever told GamesMaster host Dominik Diamond (albeit at the age of 6) that his favourite ever video game was Bart Simpson's Escape from Camp Deadly. Turns out it holds up pretty well, so maybe it wasn't such a bad choice after all. Cheers for everything you've ever done, bold yin.

To my incredible wife Louise: in the last book I wrote 'Next time I'll get it, honest', then proceeded to do the opposite of getting it, resulting in the most stressful book yet. I'm indescribably grateful for your patience with me as I struggled through it and am excited that I'll get to make it up with you with the next book, which will be far less full-on. What I'm saying is next time I'll get it, honest. I love you.

Finally, to my wee superstar Serena. I've prayed for the day you would finally get into video games and now that you're asking me every night to play Super Mario Bros Wonder I couldn't be happier to share my hobby with you. Even if you didn't care about games I'd still love you more than anything else in the world (after all, yer maw is still on the scene and I love her to bits even though I've given up trying to get her into games), but sharing my favourite hobby with my wee pal is something that will never get old. I will love you forever.

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FOREWORD

Long before the age of smartphones and similar technology, the idea of having video games in your pocket was absurd. Back in the 1970s and 1980s, you had to go to an arcade to play the latest video games. This changed as home consoles such as the NES, Atari and so forth came but things weren't quite portable (to a mainstream degree) until the Game & Watch and, later, the Game Boy.

The introduction of the Game Boy in 1989 revolutionised gaming as a whole. No longer was it an extravagant luxury requiring a television to work: rather, it was just a simple device you could put in your pocket or in your bag to take with you to play wherever you wanted.

Some of my earliest memories came from when I got a Game Boy with Super Mario Land, Tetris and Yoshi. I had this gaming device and I could play it on my own, without having to share with my brother and sister. It was a personal thing and I could just play its games for hours and hours.

Even taking it to school and slyly playing it in the playground was a core memory, with the other kids crowding round to have a look at the games I was playing, and being the kid that had the Link Cable: being able to play multiplayer helped me socialise and make more friends.

Many of the franchises you came to know and love in the arcades and at home ended up getting their own iterations on the Game Boy, from Mario to Donkey Kong, Metal Gear to TV and movie favourites like DuckTales. There was so much variety on the Game Boy over its 11 years of life, and it even resulted in the creation of the franchise I hold dear to my heart, Pokémon.

That franchise alone exemplifies everything that went right with the Game Boy as a personal portable gaming device. You went on your own sculpted adventure with your own Pokémon, raised in the

way you decided to raise them, and by linking up with friends to trade and battle with them you were being shown possibilities that wouldn't be widespread on any other gaming format for another decade.

Without the Game Boy and its successors, it could easily be argued that portable technology as we see it now, from the Nintendo Switch to smartphones to smartwatches, may not exist. Without it, I know my life would certainly be different. It was a true revolution of the gaming industry.

Joe Merrick Webmaster and owner of Serebii.net

INTRODUCTION

The Game Boy is the system that was played the most in my household. Note that I didn't say it was the system I personally played the most. In what I'm sure is a situation replicated in countless other homes around the world, the Game Boy – long before the Wii and mobile games were more widely credited for it – was one of the first video game systems that truly appealed to those who didn't consider themselves video game fans. Given how relatively young the industry still was at this point, this usually meant parents. By including a copy of Tetris with every Game Boy in the west, Nintendo was slipping a Trojan horse into every household: one that was easy enough to understand without any prior gaming experience, meaning mums and dads found themselves having a sneaky go at it when the kids weren't playing. The inclusion of a Link Cable was also an inspired one: as soon as a second Game Boy entered the home -either to stop the kids fighting over it or to stop the parents stealing it – its second copy of Tetris meant that home now had access to one of the most compelling two-player games of all time. Decades after my brother and I got our Game Boys, my parents continued to battle each other at Tetris every night. Dr Mario may be my mum's all-time favourite, but take her on at Game Boy Tetris and I don't care how good you think you are at games, she'll reduce you to a husk.

For someone like me who grew up in an era where video games were still considered either a kid's plaything or something stereotypically nerdy grownups played in secret without telling their friends or colleagues about it, the Game Boy was a rare source of validation. There will, of course, have been people who were lucky enough to have 'cool' parents back in the late '80s and early '90s who already played video games with them, but so many others just wanted the grown-ups in their lives to understand their love for the hobby and appreciate that it wasn't mindless brain-rot:

the Game Boy – and Tetris in particular – provided that mutual respect for the medium where sons and mothers, daughters and dads could play against each other.

It's a different game I think of, however, when I think of this book and what (I hope) it stands for. For a couple of years my mum was also obsessed with HAL Laboratory's Game Boy puzzle game Shanghai. For those not familiar with it (or its numerous Activision-published successors or imitations), Shanghai lays out a bunch of Mahjong tiles on the screen and asks you to remove pairs, with the catch being that you can only remove tiles that are on the end of a row. It's an extremely simple concept but has enough opportunities for failure that it's got 'one more go' written all over it, and my mum – not to mention myself, if I'm being honest – couldn't get enough of it. And yet, even though Shanghai was a highlight of the Scullion household, the game rarely features on many 'Best Game Boy Games' lists: our experience was not a shared one.

Given that around 118 million Game Boy and Game Boy Color handhelds were sold, I think it's fair to assume that other households and players had their own favourite (or least favourite) handheld experiences that don't get regular retrospective coverage. You don't have to look far online to find people waxing lyrical about Tetris, Super Mario Land, The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening and the Pokémon series, but what about Bart Simpson's Escape from Camp Deadly, or Mickey's Racing Adventure, or Godzilla: The Series? Maybe your Granny maxed out her bank balance in Caesars Palace, or maybe you found NFL Quarterback Club in a bargain bin on holiday and became obsessed with mastering its mini-games. Whatever your own personal experience was with the Game Boy and Game Boy Color, you'll find it in this book: every single game officially released for both handhelds in North America, Europe and Australia can be found here, no matter how niche.

This is the sixth encyclopedia I've written (you can still find my NES, *SNES, Mega Drive / Genesis, N64* and *Dreamcast* ones, if you'll forgive the cheap plug) and it was easily the hardest. Not only is it the biggest book I've written to date by more than 150 entries, it was also clear while writing it that the Game Boy is sorely underrepresented when it comes to information online. While it's relatively easy to find things like manual scans, magazine articles and retrospective reviews on console games, there are many Game

Boy titles that have essentially disappeared into the shadows. Even ports of some high-profile games often have extensive information on their console versions but less than a sentence on the Game Boy version (or, even worse, the same description is just applied to it, even when it's often a completely different game). While this made researching this book a minor nightmare, I hope it also means the deep digging required for some titles makes it a useful resource that finally gives every title in the Game Boy library the acknowledgment it deserves. After all, every game in this book, no matter how niche, was part of someone's childhood.

Thank you so much for reading this book: I can't stress how much it means to me that all the hard work that goes into it is eventually read (and hopefully enjoyed) by actual people instead of me just writing into a void. As ever, if you have any feedback I'd love to hear it – either on Twitter or X or whatever it's called now @Scullyl888, or via email at chrisscullionl888@gmail.com – and please do review the book on Amazon (or your own site or blog, if you have one) to spread the word: the more people read these books, the more I can continue to make them. Speaking of which, if you think this book is hefty, wait until you see the next one. I'll see you in 2026 for the nearly 500-page *PlayStation Encyclopedia*.

With love *Chris Scullion*

THE HISTORY OF THE GAME BOY

After finding initial success with its Famicom console in Japan (and its later western incarnation the NES), Nintendo decided to turn its sights to handheld video games to see if it could create something similarly successful in a portable format. Handheld electronic games dated all the way back to the mid '70s, with the earliest examples using red LED lights for their displays and later examples using LCD screens. It was the latter that first drew the attention of Gunpei Yokoi, who had been a toy designer at Nintendo since the 1960s and was responsible for the company's hugely successful Ultra Hand toy in 1966, eventually becoming head of Nintendo's R&D division.

The story goes that one day, while travelling on the Shinkansen bullet train, Yokoi spotted a businessman who was playing with an LCD calculator by messing around with the buttons. LCD technology was a number of years old by this point and was used in calculators and watches, but when he saw this Yokoi realised that the tech could be fun as well as practical, and thought up the idea of an LCD watch that could double as a basic game. After putting the idea to Nintendo president Hiroshi Yamauchi, the Game & Watch was born. A total of 60 Game & Watch designs were released between 1980 and 1991, all offering games that were very basic but fun enough to pass the time.

The Game & Watch's development was based on a philosophy Yokoi followed called 'lateral thinking with withered technology'. Yokoi's theory was that instead of creating shiny new products that used cutting-edge (and expensive) technology, it was more practical to take older tech which had already been around for a number of years – and was therefore better understood by developers and cheaper to manufacture – and think of revolutionary new ways to use it: hence taking the LCD tech that had been used in watches and

calculators for numerous years and making games with it. It was a philosophy that would be carried over to Yokoi's next project, which was to become the one that would define his career.

The Game Boy wasn't the first handheld to use interchangeable cartridges: the Microvision by Milton Bradley was released in 1979 and had a total of 12 games released for it, but the limitations of the hardware meant they were all similar looking (and, according to former Nintendo designer Satoru Okada, was one of the reasons the Game & Watch went with standalone LCD games that each looked notably distinct). According to Okada, Yokoi originally wanted the Game Boy to be a successor to the Game & Watch – something that would only last a couple of years and have a selection of in-house games – but after 'rather stubborn' badgering from Okada the product became more like a handheld Famicom, something built to last with the ability for third parties to develop and release their own games for it.

Yokoi's philosophy would still be incorporated for elements of the Game Boy's design, however, most notably when it came to its display. While it would have been possible for the Game Boy to have a fancy colour screen – such as that featured on the Atari Lynx, which was released just five months later – Nintendo's R&D team instead opted to go for a simpler dotmatrix display. The display that was used had obvious drawbacks: games could only be displayed in four shades of 'grey' (though the tinted screen made them look yellow-green instead), and the screen's slow refresh rate meant previous frames could still be seen for a split-second, making for a sort of blurry 'ghosting' effect during games with fast movement or scrolling.

There were benefits too, however. The dot matrix tech was very cheap to manufacture, meaning the Game Boy could be released at a relatively low price (even though it was still packing some decent hardware aside from the display). It was also far less power-intensive than more elaborate displays would have been, and given that many players would be playing the Game Boy on the move this was extremely important. It's important at this stage to remind any youngsters reading that this was before the days of built-in batteries like you have in your phone or Switch: in those days you had to keep swapping in new batteries, and the Game Boy could run for around 15 hours on four AA batteries, which was impressive. It also made Nintendo's handheld a more appealing prospect for parents

when compared to the eventual competition: the Atari Lynx and Sega's Game Gear (released in 1991) each boasted far more impressive colour screens but had dismal battery lives (3–4 hours on six AAs for the Lynx, 4-5 hours on six AAs for the Game Gear).

Most importantly, the Game Boy had something its competitors

could never have: Nintendo games. While it would ultimately be Tetris that would become the handheld's 'killer app' and would give the handheld mass appeal among hardcore and 'casual' players of all ages, the importance of Super Mario Land at launch also can't be understated and the subsequent release of new games in the Zelda, Metroid, Kid Icarus and Donkey Kong series made it clear to NES owners that the Game Boy provided new adventures for their favourite characters on the go.

In 1996 Nintendo released the Game Boy Pocket, which addressed many of the issues of the Game Boy. Not only was it smaller and lighter, it also featured a new display which looked more black-and-white than yellow-green, and which eliminated ghosting almost entirely (though this did expose some of the deliberate flickering tricks some developers used to get more out of the original hardware, which are explained in some entries in this book). The Pocket also lasted 10 hours on a mere two AAA batteries. If you can find one, though, the best Game Boy model was the Game Boy Light, which was only released in Japan and included a built-in backlight for playing in the dark. With just two AA batteries, it could run for 12 hours with the light on and 20 hours with it off.

The Game Boy's design philosophy can be seen in many of Nintendo's other hardware launches over the decades that followed. While on occasion the company would go for cutting-edge tech – the N64 and GameCube were powerful consoles at the time – these often resulted in third-place finishes, and instead the company seems to perform best when it adopts the 'lateral thinking with withered technology' principle. The DS was far less powerful than the Sony PSP but ended up selling twice as many because of its innovations and its software (see also the 3DS versus the Vita). The Wii was famously barely more powerful than its predecessor and its standard-def games looked far worse than the HD wonders of the Xbox 360 and PS3, but 101 million console sales later it was clear that Nintendo had made the right move. And the Nintendo Switch, which has spent its entire lifespan being criticised for being 'underpowered', has become the company's best-selling home console ever. Yokoi may not have lived to see the true fruits of his labour – he tragically died in a road accident in 1997 – but the Game Boy's DNA continues to run through every major success Nintendo has to this day.

GAME BOY pocket
B
A
SELECT START

GAME BOY LIGHT

GAME BOY GAMES

The Game Boy's library in the west ran for an entire decade, from its launch games in 1989 to the release of Pokémon Yellow in 1999 in North America and 2000 in Europe. As such, the roughly 580 titles released in the west varied quite substantially as the years went on, something most obvious when you look at the output from Nintendo itself. While titles like Super Mario Land were an exception, the company's early Game Boy games included relatively simplistic offerings like the bat-and-ball game Alleyway and handheld versions of its already basic Baseball and Tennis games. Over time, however, the quality and scale of Nintendo's Game Boy titles increased dramatically: you only had to look at the difference between Super Mario Land and its sequel to see how far the handheld had come in just three years.

The Game Boy was also able to attract a healthy number of third-party publishers and developers keen to get their games on the popular handheld. Numerous well-loved series ended up with Game Boy ports or spin-offs, including the likes of Castlevania, Final Fantasy, Double Dragon, Mega Man, DuckTales, Bomberman, FIFA, Bonk, Bionic Commando, Lemmings, Madden, NBA Jam, Turok and Mortal Kombat, and while their quality varied (quite drastically in some cases) it made for a glamorous line-up nevertheless.

Also prevalent on the Game Boy – perhaps even more than on the consoles of the time – was a host of licensed games based on popular movies and TV shows. It may have been because the simpler nature of Game Boy games made them cheaper to make (and made them easier to forgive when many of them were inevitably rubbish), but the handheld was host to spin-off games based on a who's-who of IPs, such as Yogi Bear, Roger Rabbit, Waterworld, Tom & Jerry, Tintin, Swamp Thing, Star Trek, Small Soldiers, Rugrats, McDonalds, Last Action Hero, The Jetsons and countless others. As such, this book is as much a window into

popular culture of the ‘90s and early 2000s as it is an encyclopedia of Game Boy games.

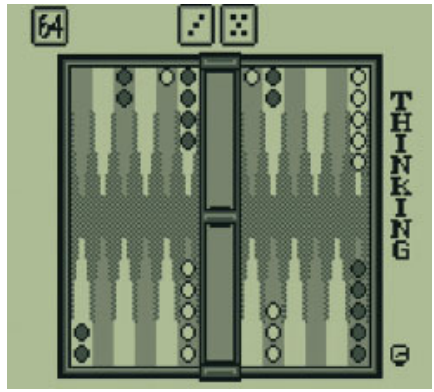
There are numerous ways to play Game Boy games today (including emulation, which you can look into yourself because it’s legally iffy), but while using the original 1989 handheld is clearly the most authentic method, it’s also the least convenient due to its blurry visuals and its lack of backlight. If you absolutely must play on the original hardware, there are numerous places online where you can buy modified Game Boy hardware in which the screen has been replaced with a new backlit IPS display. This makes the games infinitely sharper and easier to see, while still providing the authentic feel of the original form factor and buttons. These often replace the battery compartment with a rechargeable USB battery too, meaning you don’t need to carry AAs with you.

One of the more expensive solutions – but one I personally recommend and the one I used for most of the time I spent playing games for research for this book – is the Analogue Pocket. This modern handheld uses FPGA technology to recreate the Game Boy hardware to a near-perfect degree, and supports actual GameBoy and GameBoy Color cartridges, meaning if you have a collection of old games from back in the day, they’ll all still work on it.

If you have a SNES console (in which case I also recommend the *SNES Encyclopedia*, wink wink) there’s also the Super Game Boy, an officially released add-on which can be inserted into the SNES cartridge slot and contains its own slot for Game Boy games. Not only does this let you play them on TV, some games are also Super Game Boy enhanced, meaning they have improved visuals or audio, or special bespoke borders around the screen. Finally, if you have a Nintendo Switch, you can access a growing selection of Game Boy and Game Boy Color games with its Nintendo Switch Online service.

4-IN-1 FUN PAK

Year 1992
Publisher Interplay
Developer Beam Software



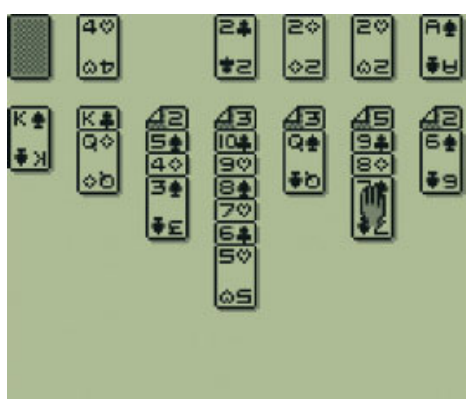
BEFORE YOU EMBARK on this library of new-fangled electronic video games, it's worth taking a moment to acknowledge the physical board games that came before them. Luckily, that's exactly what 4-in-1 Fun Pak attempts to do, with digital recreations of four classic games: Chess, Checkers, Reversi (otherwise known as Othello) and Backgammon. Each game allows you to play solo against the AI: Chess has six levels of difficulty while the others only have three. Let's face it, though, these games are best played with other people, which is why there are also two 2-player modes: you can either take turns passing the Game Boy between each other, or use a Link Cable so that each player can have their own handheld. ■

FACT

One of the game's three testers was Chris Jones, who would go on to become one of the co-founders of Obsidian Entertainment.

4-IN-1 FUN PAK: VOLUME II

Year 1993
Publisher Interplay
Developer Beam Software



IF YOU THOUGHT the 4-in-1 fun had stopped with a mere single pak, you're in for the shock of your life. Volume II offers a further

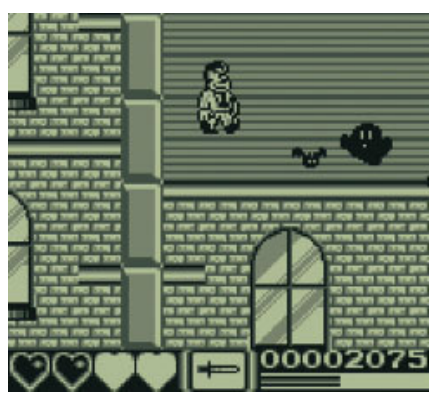
quartet of traditional favourites, but this time the boards have been ditched. Instead, players can choose between Dominoes, the poker-like dice game Yacht and two card games, Solitaire and Cribbage. Despite the fact that Solitaire is famously a… well, solitary game, there's a two-player version here in which each player competes to clear their decks first. One would think this was an attempt to ensure all four games have a multiplayer option, but then Yacht is single-player only so the sheer anarchy on display here is palpable.

FACT

The manual advises players to 'keep an eye out for Fun Pak Volumes III & IV coming soon'. These were renamed Solitaire FunPak and Casino Fun Pak.

THE ADDAMS FAMILY

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Ocean Ocean



WHEN THEIR CROOKED attorney Tully Alford tries to get his hands on their fortune, the Addams Family (minus Gomez) meet with him to try and reason with him. By the time Gomez gets home, his family are all missing, so off he trots to try to find them all. Starting

at the front door of the Addams residence, you have to explore the house and its surrounding grounds in search of Lurch, Granny, Pugsley and Wednesday, before giving Tully a smack in the chops and saving Morticia (who's being dangled over a big cooking pot for some reason). Potions transform Gomez into a wolfman, sea monster, vampire and Frankenstein's monster, each with unique effects: the wolfman potion, for example, improves his running and jumping abilities. ■

FACT

Christina Ricci, who plays Wednesday Addams in the 1991 movie, would end up playing her dorm mother in Netflix's series *Wednesday* 31 years later.

THE ADDAMS FAMILY: PUGSLEY'S SCAVENGER HUNT

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Ocean Ocean

THE GAME BOY version of The Addams Family was a completely different game to the 16-bit versions, and the same was true of the sequel, Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt. In fact, there's actually no scavenger hunt to be found at all: instead, Pugsley's family members have been kidnapped and hidden in the Addams residence, so he has to find them all. If that sounds a bit like the

first game, that's because the Game Boy version of Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt is actually a port of the first 16-bit Addams Family title, albeit with Gomez replaced with Pugsley and some stages removed to fit it onto the handheld. If you already have the first game on the SNES, then, there's no point getting this one. ■

FACT

The NES version (which is also a port of the first 16-bit game) is missing the Freezer and Crypt levels, while the Game Boy version omits the Stove level on top of those.

ADVENTURE ISLAND

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Hudson Soft Hudson Soft

RATHER THAN A Game Boy port of the original Adventure Island platformer on the NES, this is instead a handheld version of its sequel Adventure Island II. The hero, Master Higgins, has to save Princess Leilani's sister Tina from the evil Witch Doctor: to do this, he has to make his way through eight islands, each comprising five stages, and take out the boss at the end of each until he ends up face-to-face with the Witch Doctor himself. Because this is based on the second game, Master Higgins has the ability to collect power-

ups in the shape of playing card symbols, which allow him to ride dinosaur friends – a fireball-spitting Camptosaurus, a fast-swimming Elasmosaurus and a flying Pteranodon. ■

FACT

Although the first NES game's manual said you were rescuing Leilani, the ending calls her Tina (her name in Japan). This game's plot is an attempt to merge it all together.

ADVENTURE ISLAND II: ALIENS IN PARADISE

Year 1993
Publisher Hudson Soft
Developer Now Production

JUST TO KEEP the confusion going, Hudson Soft followed up its Game Boy port of Adventure Island II with a port of the third game, and – realising that it had now committed to an off-kilter numbering scheme – decided to stick with it. Adventure Island II on the Game Boy, then, is basically a handheld version of Adventure Island III, in which Master Higgins has to rescue his new lady friend Jeannie Jungle. She's been kidnapped by aliens and dumped on one of eight islands, so you have to make your way through them to find her. Although the platforming gameplay is similar to the NES game, this version does add a password system and a map screen

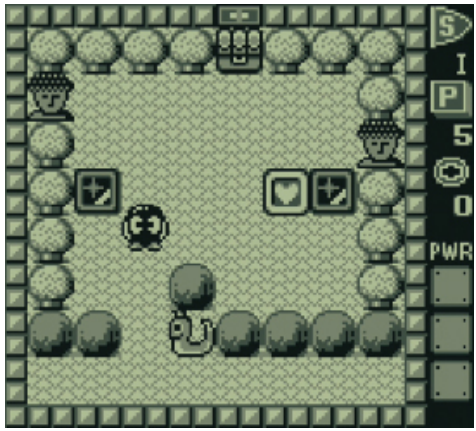
which lets you replay previously beaten stages. ■

FACT

The five ridable dinos have names: Don-Don the pteranodon, Classie the elasmosaurus, Poley the tripetaurus, and two camptosaurs called Taylor and Magma.

ADVENTURES OF LOLO

Year Publisher Developer 1995 Nintendo HAL Laboratory



ALTHOUGH THERE WERE a few Adventures of Lolo games on the NES, this Game Boy title isn't a port of any of them: it's a standalone game with its own set of puzzles. As with its console counterparts, the game has you playing as a little blob character called Lolo who has to collect all the hearts on each stage: this opens a treasure chest, whose contents you have to grab before reaching the exit. The Japanese version of the game has 50 puzzles while the European one has 144, so this is very much the one to get. The European version also has Super Game Boy support, which the Japanese cart doesn't. ■

FACT

If you don't press anything for 86 seconds, Lolo falls asleep. Wait a further five minutes and he'll say 'What an idea!' and offer a video showing how to complete the stage.

THE ADVENTURES OF ROCKY AND BULLWINKLE AND FRIENDS

Year Publisher Developer 1992 THQ Imagineering

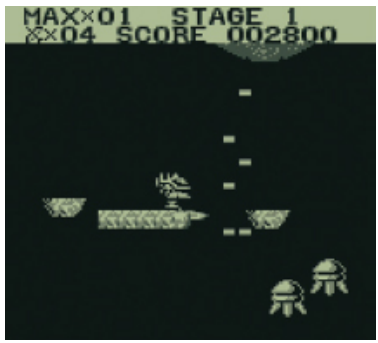
NOTORIOUS NO-GOODNIKS BORIS Badenov and Natasha Fatale have broken into the Rocky and Bullwinkle museum and stolen some of the heroic duo's fabled treasures. It's up to everyone's favourite moose and squirrel combo (more by default, to be fair) to get them back. Although the plot is similar to that of the NES game, the Game Boy version of Rocky and Bullwinkle is completely different and only consists of three stages: Frostbite Falls (in which you play as Bullwinkle), the Moon (Rocky) and the Abominable Manor (Bullwinkle again). The game is notorious for being one of the most difficult platformers on the Game Boy, mainly because Bullwinkle's sprite is so large and practically everything is trying to kill him. ■

FACT

Stand on any of the six signposts in Frostbite Falls and press Start, Select, B and Up together and the sign will change to display one of the developers' names.

THE ADVENTURES OF STAR SAVER

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Taito A-Wave



ONE SUMMER EVENING, Kevin and his sister Connie were abducted by aliens planning to attack Earth. After refusing to join them, Kevin is ejected from their ship, but then encounters a robot called Tom Wolf who offers to help him. Using the robot's suit, Kevin has to infiltrate the aliens' headquarters, save his sister and stop the invasion. The Adventures of Star Saver is an action platformer in which you initially start by controlling Tom Wolf 's big mech suit. When you take a hit, the suit is lost and you're just regular old Kevin until you can get it back again. If Kevin ever falls off a ledge he can use a 'life rope' to get back, but there are limited quantities of these. ■

FACT

The Japanese version, which is called Rubble Saver, flips the story around and has you playing as the sister instead, with the aim being to rescue the brother.

AEROSTAR

Year Publisher Developer 1991 Vic Tokai Vic Tokai

NOT TO BE confused with the Romanian aeronautical manufacturing company – it's an easy mistake to make – Aerostar is an interesting shoot 'em up set in 2087, shortly after World War VI (sounds like we have a rough few decades ahead of us). Flying the fighter ship Aerostar, you have to destroy the mutant forces who roam the Earth so it can be made inhabitable for humans again. What's unconventional about Aerostar is that even though it's a vertical-scrolling shoot 'em up, your ship can only stay in the air for a short period of time. This means you have to stay on the ground and follow the roads there, only taking to the skies for brief periods, almost like an extended jump button. ■

FACT

The game has more than 50 enemy types, which may explain why whoever named them in the manual ended up resorting to the likes of Split, Splatt, Chunk and Porkazoid.

ALADDIN

Year Publisher Developer 1994 THQ / Virgin Interactive
NMS Software

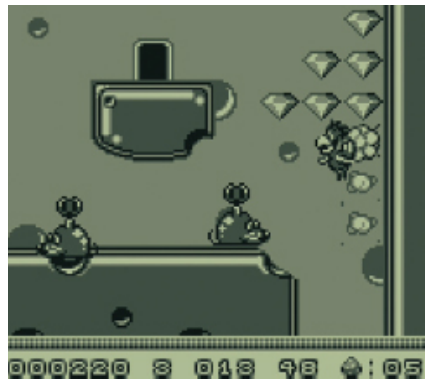
THE SEGA MEGA Drive / Genesis version of Aladdin was heralded for what was incredible animation at the time, so when the game was ported to the Game Boy attempts were made to retain as much of that as possible. As such, despite clearly being a major visual downgrade, the monochrome take on Virgin's game still has impressive running animations in some areas, arguably to the detriment of the gameplay. Oddly, the game only has three music tracks which appear to have been applied to each with no rhyme or reason, leading to the rather odd final boss in which Aladdin fights the evil Jafar while the romantic ballad 'A Whole New World' plays in the background. The Game Boy Color version (see later) addresses these issues. ■

FACT

The button naming structure of both systems means the Game Boy version still has the same level skip cheat as the Mega Drive one: pause and press A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A.

ALFRED CHICKEN

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Mindscape Twilight



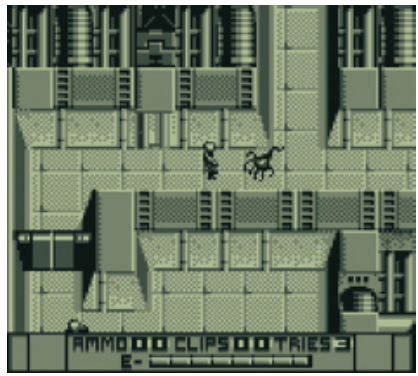
ALTHOUGH ALFRED CHICKEN eventually ended up on a variety of platforms (so to speak) including the Amiga, NES and SNES, the Game Boy version was the original one. In it, Alfred has to rescue Billy Egg and his friends from the evil Meka-Chickens, who plan to use their eggy victims for cloning experiments. To reach them, he must make his way through a series of large stages, pecking and releasing every balloon in each. Each stage also has a secret room where Alfred's friend, a giant sunflower called Mr Peckles, gives him jam, which lets him fire seeds. If you can, get the Japanese version: it has extra illustrations for each stage intro and adds Super Game Boy support. ■

FACT

Ocean was first to offer to publish Alfred Chicken, on the condition that he was replaced by Woodstock from *Peanuts*. Alfred's creator Jason McGann refused.

ALIEN 3

Year Publisher Developer 1993 LJN Bits Studios



IT'S COMMONLY KNOWN that the SNES version of Alien 3 is a completely different game from the one released on Sega consoles, the Amiga, the NES and the like. What's less well-known is that the Game Boy title is also an entirely original adventure. Rather than the side-scrolling action platforming on other systems, this is a top-down adventure with a slower pace, which sees Ripley exploring the Fiorina 161 prison colony while taking on missions given to her by Dillon, the prison's *de facto* inmate leader. Starting off with no weaponry, Ripley eventually gathers an arsenal which helps her take out the xenomorphs, protect the prisoners and kill the Queen Alien, all before the Weyland-Yutani company arrives. ■

FACT

The Game Boy version of Alien 3 has a totally different ending to the movie, in which Ripley gets back into her escape pod, hooks Bishop up to it to power it up, and flies off to safety.

ALIEN OLYMPICS 2044 AD

Year Publisher Developer 1994 Ocean Dark Technologies

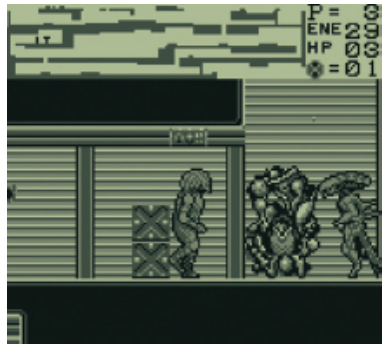
ALTHOUGH IT DOESN'T appear to have been licensed by the International Olympic Committee – there's no mention of it on the box or in the game itself – this multi-event offering happily chucks around the 'Olympics' name and iconic five-ring logo regardless. The plot doesn't sound entirely IOC-canon: after the aliens won every medal at the 2012 Olympics (I knew there was something funny about those London Games), the Earth Council bans them from taking part again. Fast forward 32 years later and the Alien Olympics are an independent event, with 15 disciplines including the 100 QBits Sprint, the Laser Leap (i.e. hurdles) and the Wall Jump, which is sort of like the High Jump except you're scored based on how high you splatter yourself against a wall. ■

FACT

A prototype version of the game was found with the title Alien Games 2044 AD, so presumably at some point Ocean either got a sneaky IOC nod or just decided to risk it.

ALIEN VS PREDATOR: THE LAST OF HIS CLAN

Year 1993
Publisher Activision
Developer ASK Kodansha



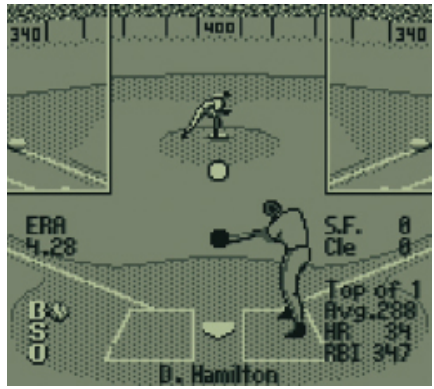
BEING THE MOST fearsome race of hunters in the galaxy is all well and good but when you've emptied your entire planet of prey, what do you do? If you're the Predators you deliberately drop a bunch of Alien eggs on a planet inhabited by a human colony, wait for them to hatch and take over, then land on the planet to hunt them for fun. There's just one problem: somehow an Alien Queen ends up on the planet and starts firing out eggs like a machine gun, so when the Predators land they're almost entirely wiped out. Cue a side-scrolling Metroidvania in which you play as the last surviving predator, as he tries to avenge his clan's honour by killing the Alien Queen before escaping the planet. ■

FACT

The Japanese version ends with a load of text about how the lone Predator boarded its ship and flew off, leaving the city in silence. The western version just says 'Mission Completed'.

ALL-STAR BASEBALL 99

Year Publisher Developer 1998 Acclaim Realtime Associates



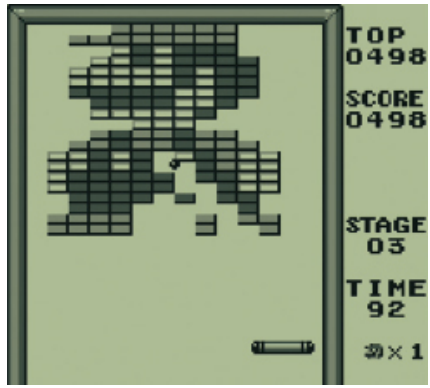
IF YOU'VE READ previous books in this series of encyclopedias (in which case, thank you), you'll be fully aware that American sports games have been rife on most consoles ever since the early days of home gaming. The Game Boy is no exception, so All-Star Baseball 99 is the first of many you'll come across in this book. A handheld counterpart to the N64 title of the same name, this features all the teams, players and stats from the 1997 MLB season (that's what happens when you release your '99 game in the first half of 1998). It also includes the 1997 All-Star Game, letting you relive the glory days by pitting Griffey Jr, Ripken, Alomar and co. against the likes of Bonds, Lofton and Piazza. ■

FACT

The Tampa Bay Devil Rays, who appear here as an expansion team, were renamed the Tampa Bay Rays in 2007 after years of 'countless phone calls' pleading for a name change.

ALLEYWAY

Year 1989
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Intelligent Systems



IT CAN BE quite difficult to make the Breakout-style 'bat and ball' genre feel unique, especially when a developer doesn't add things like power-ups (like Taito's Arkanoid did). Alleyway is one game that doesn't use them, so its hook is the use of Mario characters. The game starts with Mario jumping into a hatch in the 'bat' (which is actually a spaceship), and every fourth stage is a bonus level where the blocks are laid out like a Super Mario Bros character (be that Mario, a Goomba, a Piranha Plant or what have you). Add to that different stage types (including ones where the blocks scroll or move downwards) and the result is a game that's still very basic, but has at least some variety. ■

FACT

Alleyway was one of four Game Boy launch titles in Japan, along with Baseball, Super Mario Land and mahjong title Yakuman. Tetris didn't appear until two months later.

ALTERED SPACE: A 3D ALIEN ADVENTURE

Year 1991
Publisher Sony / Hi Tech
Developer Expressions Software Creations

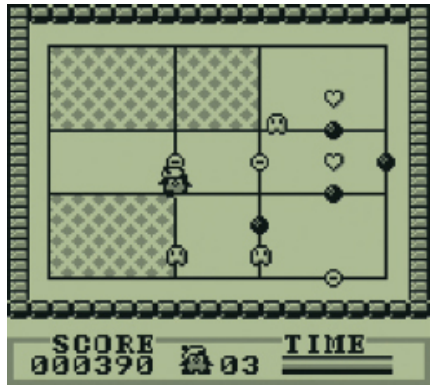
IN THE FUTURE (the year 2020), an astronaut called Humphrey sets out to be the first man on Mars. When his spaceship develops issues and he steps out of the airlock to investigate, he's captured by two aliens called Zaks and taken aboard their ship. It's up to Humphrey to escape, but he can't remove his spacesuit because the Zaks breathe a poisonous chlorine gas. The game is an isometric platformer, where the player explores the maze-like series of rooms, avoiding enemies and collecting items to use elsewhere. The game was programmed by veteran ZX Spectrum programmer Mike Follin, which may go some way to explaining why it's very similar to many games in the isometric platform puzzle genre (see Knight Lore, Head Over Heels and the like). ■

FACT

Follin was best known for his ZX Spectrum port of The Sentinel, one of the first examples of polygonal graphics on the 48K RAM computer.

AMAZING PENGUIN

Year 1990
Publisher Natsume
Developer Natsume



THE EVIL WIZARD Borbon the Great has taken over the penguins' kingdom, and summoned animated pencils, erasers and crayons to guard its passageways. You play as the King's son, Prince Pendrich, who has been sent to stop them. The game consists of 40 stages, each made up of a series of large rectangles. You have to run around their edges, kicking the black and white seals protecting them (that's 'seals' as in things sealed to the stage, not animals). If you kick a black one it slides across the floor, knocking enemies off the edge of the stage, while if you kick a white one the enemies change direction. A stage is complete once you kick every black and white seal on it. ■

FACT

If you hold Left and A while pressing Start on the Password option, you can enter the passwords 303030 for a Level Select, or 505050 for a Sound Test.

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN

Year 1990
Publisher LJN / Nintendo
Developer Rare

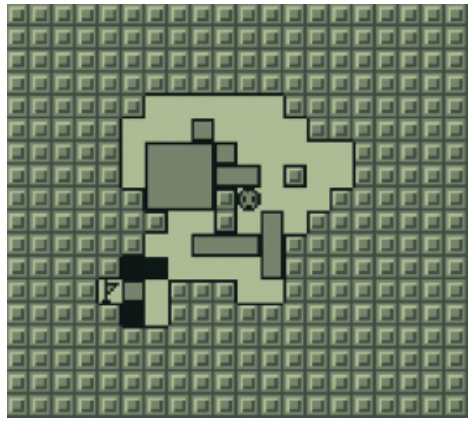
SPIDER-MAN'S BELOVED WIFE Mary Jane has been kidnapped, and there isn't just one villain responsible, but six of the sods. This extremely difficult platformer has you fighting through a New York alleyway to face Mysterio, up a skyscraper to fight Hobgoblin, along the top of a subway train to reach Scorpion, through Central Park to confront Rhino, up another skyscraper to find Dr Octopus, and finally through the sewers for a final battle against Venom. Naturally, Spidey is armed with the ability to not only punch and flying-kick enemies, but also shoot webs at them and swing from said webs. The game was most notable, however, for the way in which practically everyone in New York is out to get you, leading to frequent deaths. ■

FACT

The manual shows Green Goblin instead of Hobgoblin. Rare's Chris Sutherland has said he believes the team was asked to swap Hobgoblin in at the last minute, perhaps because he was in more comics at the time.

A-MAZING TATER

Year 1992 *Publisher* Atlus *Developer* Atlus



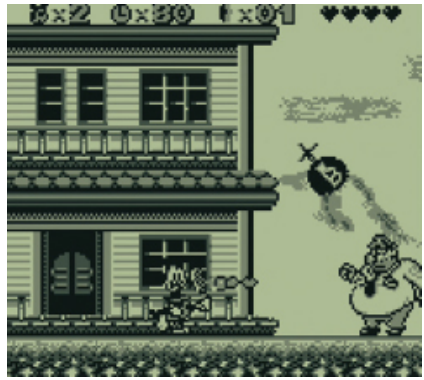
YOUNG SPUD WANTS to be a Knight of the Garden, but King Watermelon doesn't hand that title out to any old foodstuff. In order to prove he's got what it takes, Spud has to pass a series of tests, in which he has to make his way through obstacle-filled rooms to reach the goal flag. The gameplay here is the same sort of block-shifting fare you often see as one-off puzzles in other games, though here the blocks can also be pushed into pits to fill them up so they can be walked over. The other main twist is that some levels contain more than one character, as players switch between Spud and his pals Rooty Carrot, Pepo the Red Pepper and Arnie Eggplant.

FACT

Although the plots are unrelated in the west, this is the sequel to Kwirk. In Japan, Kwirk is known as Puzzle Boy, while this is Puzzle Boy II.

ANIMANIACS

Year Publisher Developer 1995 Konami Factor 5



BASED ON THE popular Warner Bros animated series, the Game Boy Animaniacs game is a handheld port of the Mega Drive title released a year earlier. As in that game, players control Yakko, Wakko and Dot as they visit different film sets in the Warner Bros studio lot to find movie props they can sell. Each character has their own unique abilities: Yakko can move boxes, Wakko can destroy things with his mallet and Dot can flirt (yes, I know) to get access to new areas. As well as the obvious graphical downgrade expected from a Mega Drive to Game Boy port, the handheld version also leaves out some stages, and only one hero appears on-screen at a time (instead of all three). ■

FACT

Animaniacs is one of the few Game Boy games that take full advantage of the Super Game Boy's sound capabilities: play the game on the SNES add-on and the entire soundtrack is enhanced.

ARCADE CLASSIC 1: ASTEROIDS & MISSILE COMMAND

Year 1995
Publisher Nintendo
Developer The Code Monkeys

IN 1995, NINTENDO published a series of 2-in-1 cartridges featuring Game Boy ports of classic arcade games. The first of these is a collaboration with Accolade and includes two titles developed by The Code Monkeys. Asteroids is a take on Atari's 1979 shoot 'em up and features two visual styles, Classic (where the ship and asteroids are simple polygonal shapes) and Updated (where they look more, well, shippy and asteroidy). Then there's Missile Command, a 1980 Atari creation in which players defend a city from incoming enemy missiles by shooting them out of the sky. This one doesn't have Classic and Updated graphics options, instead only opting for the latter, and making things more interesting by naming each stage (Cairo, New York etc). ■

FACT

This is the only game in the Arcade Classic series in which both games are available as standalone Game Boy releases (albeit with some differences).

ARCADE CLASSIC 2: CENTIPEDE & MILLIPEDE

Year	1995
Publisher	Nintendo
Developer	The Code Monkeys

THE SECOND OF Nintendo and Accolade's arcade double-bills was once again developed by The Code Monkeys, and once again makes some attempt to improve the visuals (though it's far more subtle this time). First on offer in this second volume is Centipede, the single-screen shoot 'em up in which players have to destroy a centipede and its various segments as they wriggle down the screen. This is accompanied by its sequel, Millipede (which is only available on Game Boy via this compilation), which ups the difficulty a bit but also adds new features such as DDT bombs which explode when shot, spraying deadly pesticide on the millipede and any other bugs nearby. Otherwise, though, both games feel similar to play. ■

FACT

The original arcade version of Centipede was co-designed by Dona Bailey, who was the first woman to join Atari as a programmer.

ARCADE CLASSIC 3: GALAGA & GALAXIAN

Year 1995
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Namco

NINTENDO'S THIRD 2-IN- 1 arcade cartridge ditched Accolade and was instead a collaboration with Namco, offering Game Boy recreations of two of the Japanese company's most iconic shoot 'em ups. 1979's Galaxian was Namco's first big arcade hit and was its take on Space Invaders, with the main gimmick being that enemy ships would sometimes swoop down from their formation to attack you. This was followed by Galaga in 1981, which added new features including the ability of some enemies to capture your ship in a tractor beam and take it prisoner. This could be used against them, though, because in your next life you could shoot that same enemy and take back your ship, giving you double the firepower. ■

FACT

A third game in the series, Gaplus, was released in 1984 and let the player collect their own tractor beam to capture enemies instead of waiting to be captured themselves.

ARCADE CLASSIC 4: DEFENDER & JOUST

Year 1995
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Williams

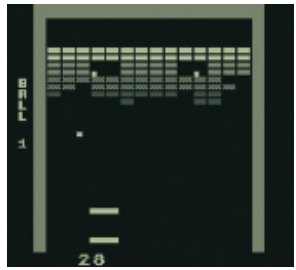
FOR THE FOURTH and final game in the Arcade Classic series, Nintendo went with yet another classic arcade developer, US company Williams Electronics, to bring its coin-op gems Defender and Joust to the Game Boy. Originally created by Eugene Jarvis (who would go on to popularise the twin-stick shooter with Robotron 2084), 1981's Defender is a side-scrolling shooter where players have to protect little people from alien ships trying to abduct them. This is accompanied by Joust, a 1982 title in which players ride a flying ostrich as they attempt to bop enemies off their airborne buzzards. All four games in the series offered Super Game Boy support, in which each game's arcade border was added. ■

FACT

Defender offers an 'Inverse' graphics mode which makes the background light and the sprites dark, instead of vice versa. The manual claims this saves battery life because 'fewer pixels are turned on'.

ARCADE CLASSICS: SUPER BREAKOUT & BATTLEZONE

Year 1996
Publisher Black Pearl Software
Developer Black Pearl Software



IN SOMETHING OF a ‘bonus stage’ for the Arcade Classic series, publisher Black Pearl Software released a fifth title of its own, throwing two more Atari favourites into the mix. Super Breakout was released in 1978 (making it the earliest of the titles, if you count this as part of the series), and is a sequel to Breakout, enhancing its basic ball-andbricks gameplay with gimmicks like double paddles, multiball and walls that slowly move downwards. Meanwhile, 1980 title Battlezone is considered the first ever 3D first-person game, and has the player driving a tank around as they try to take out rival vehicles. A deliberate flicker was added to Battlezone to give it a 3D vector effect. ■

FACT

Breakout (1976) was developed by Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak in just four days. The pair were paid $350 each plus a $5,000 bonus for completing it so quickly, but Jobs reportedly kept the bonus, not telling Wozniak.

ASTERIX

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Infogrames Bit Managers

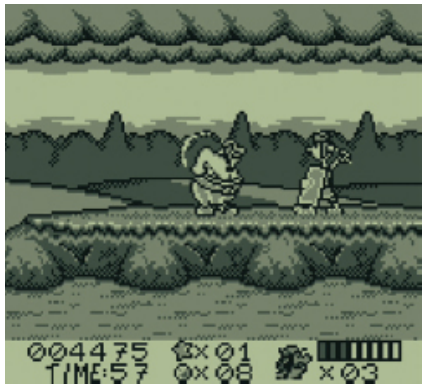
OBELIX, THE POWERFUL Gaul, has failed to return from his boar-hunting expedition. Concerned that he may have been kidnapped by the pesky Romans (spoiler: he has), his friend Asterix heads out to try and find him. This action platformer was released at roughly the same time as the NES version of Asterix, and while the Game Boy version isn't an exact like-for-like recreation it's still very much an attempt to mimic the NES game. In some ways, however, it could be said that the Game Boy version is better: its backgrounds offer basic parallax scrolling (giving the illusion of depth) and enemies are a little easier to deal with than the frustrating foes players had to deal with on the NES. ■

FACT

Composer Alberto Jose González created a track for the game called The Base. After deciding 'it didn't fit the game at all' he held onto it and reused it in Turok 2 on Game Boy Color.

ASTERIX & OBELIX

Year 1995
Publisher Infogrames
Developer Bit Managers



GIVEN THAT THE first Asterix game on Game Boy was about rescuing Obelix, it stands to reason that the big lad wasn't playable. That changed for the sequel, Asterix & Obelix (or just Obelix, according to the title screen), which gave players the option to control either character. This time the plot revolves around Julius Caesar who, frustrated that he still can't capture their small Gaul village, builds a big fence around it instead to keep them in. Keen to prove him wrong, Asterix and Obelix decide to travel the world and collect souvenirs to prove to Caesar that they can go where they want. The game is a notable improvement over the first, with detailed visuals. ■

FACT

For a limited time, players could take the box for either Game Boy Asterix game to the Parc Asterix theme park in France and show it for free entry.

ASTEROIDS

Year Publisher Developer

1992 Accolade The Code Monkeys

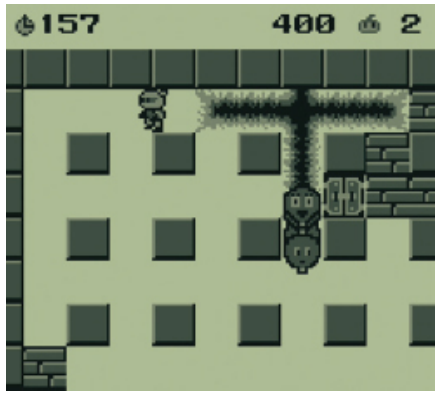
ALSO AVAILABLE IN the Arcade Classic Vol 1 cartridge along with Missile Command, this is a portable take on Atari's vintage 1979 action game. If you aren't familiar with it, players have to destroy increasingly difficult waves of asteroids as they hurtle around space, with the gimmicks being that shooting them causes them to split into increasingly smaller chunks, while at the same time you have to compensate for inertia while controlling your ship's movement. This standalone Game Boy version is similar to the one in Arcade Classic but there are one or two differences. Gone is the option to play with retro visuals, but in its place are a couple of two-player options, allowing for head-to-head or co-op play. ■

FACT

The original Asteroid game's vector graphics made a glow follow the player's ship, giving it a cool vapour trail effect. According to developer Ed Logg, this was a complete accident.

ATOMIC PUNK

Year 1991
Publisher Hudson Soft
Developer Hudson Soft



DESPITE ITS NAME, Atomic Punk is actually the first handheld game in the Bomberman series: it's known as Bomber Boy in Japan, and in Europe it's called Dynablaster, which was originally the main series' name in that region. According to the US manual, Atomic Punk is Bomberman's son, and the pair have to protect Atomica from the evil Nukies. The game is split into Game A and B modes: Game B is a handheld port of the NES version of Bomberman starring the (bomber) man himself, while Game A is a more detailed adventure starring Atomic Punk which contains a world map, eight different 'factories' (worlds) to choose from and the ability to earn and stock power-ups. ■

FACT

This is actually the first ever Bomberman game to feature a multiplayer battle mode, albeit a two-player one instead of the fourplayer action the series would become popular for.

ATTACK OF THE KILLER TOMATOES

Year 1992
Publisher THQ / Nintendo
Developer Equilibrium

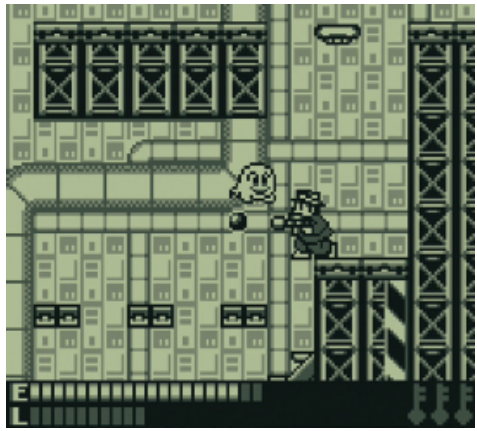
BASED ON THE 1990 animated series (which itself was based on the 1978 B-movie), Attack of the Killer Tomatoes puts the player in the role of Wilbur Finletter, a ‘veteran of the Tomato Wars’ and the only person who can stop the evil Dr Gangrene from taking over the city of San Zucchini (and eventually the world) with his army of mutated tomatoes. This isn’t a port of the NES game of the same name: it’s a completely separate 2D platformer where players have to make their way through 11 stages – taking in the likes of the streets, the rooftops, a house and a dungeon – killing tomatoes and collecting the hidden tomato can (for reasons that aren’t made clear) in each. ■

FACT

The movie’s 1988 sequel, *Return of the Killer Tomatoes*, starred a young George Clooney in one of his earliest roles.

AVENGING SPIRIT

Year 1992 *Publisher* Jaleco *Developer* Jaleco



THIS UNDERRATED LITTLE gem starts with the player already dead. You have to rescue your girlfriend Gennifer (not a typo) from a crime syndicate, but the problem is you're a ghost. To get through each stage, then, you have to possess the enemies you come across and take over them, gaining their abilities. Possess a gangster and you'll get a gun, possess a dragon man to breathe fire at enemies… you can even possess Dracula at one point. Along the way you also have to collect three hidden keys: if you do, you can unlock Gennifer's prison cell on the last stage and possess her to help her escape. If you don't… well, let's say you might have a ghosty pal to keep you company soon. ■

FACT

Avenging Spirit was originally an arcade game. The arcade version was ported to the Switch, where it can be bought digitally.

BALLOON KID

Year Publisher Developer 1990 Nintendo Pax Softnica

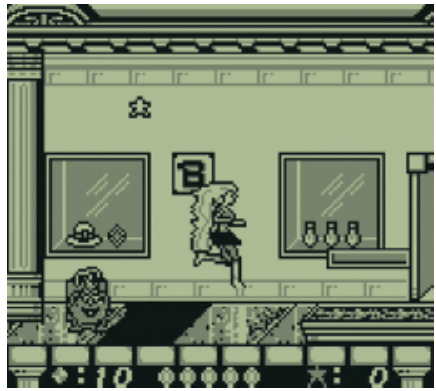
BALLOON FIGHT IS an NES classic, but this sequel is less well-known. You play as Alice, a girl flying through Pencilvania in search of her brother Jim, who's been blown away by a gust of wind. The game is auto-scrolling (though it scrolls to the left, which is unconventional) and keeps the same Balloon Fight controls of pressing the A button to 'flap' and stay up in the air (similar to the underwater controls in Super Mario Bros). The twist here is that if Alice's balloons pop and she lands on the ground, she can inflate more. Some sections even require you to deliberately let your balloons go to get through them. There's also a version of the endless Balloon Trip mode from the NES game. ■

FACT

Balloon Kid was never released in Japan, but it was repurposed as Famicom game Hello Kitty World, then released on the Game Boy Color as Balloon Fight GB.

BARBIE: GAME GIRL

Year 1992
Publisher Hi Tech Expressions
Developer Imagineering



BARBIE'S GOING OUT for dinner and dancing with Ken at the Skyline Terrace Restaurant, and they don't let any old scum in there. To make sure she looks the part, Barbie heads to the mall in search of new shoes, a pearl necklace and a new evening gown. Cue a standard platform game consisting of seven stages in which Barbie has to avoid the 'Boguses' while collecting coins and gems. Each level represents a shop in the mall, from the soda shop (where you have to avoid evil sugar cubes) to the aquarium (where Barbie transforms into a mermaid, because sure). By collecting the Heart power-up, Barbie will 'Fashion Up' and transform into Aerobics Barbie, who can do triple spin jumps. ■

FACT

There have been around 80 Barbie games released over the years, most of which were on PC CD-ROM. You haven't lived until you've played Generation Girl Gotta Groove.

BART SIMPSON'S ESCAPE FROM CAMP DEADLY

Year 1991
Publisher Acclaim
Developer Imagineering

WHEN BART AND Lisa are sent to a summer camp, it quickly turns out all is not well (maybe the name should have been a clue). It's run by Mr Burns's nephew Ironfist Burns, who wants to make sure all the kids have the most miserable time possible. It's up to Bart to escape the camp, climb Mount Deadly, defeat Ironfist and shut off the power to the camp so it can be closed for summer and the kids can be sent home. This action platformer has Bart firing spitballs and boomerangs at an endless array of bullies, as well as other enemies like cops, hornets and bears. The game includes basic speech: hit Lisa and she'll say 'Stop it Bart'. ■

FACT

At one point you encounter axe murderer Madman Mort, who's hanging upside down from a trap. You can kill him or free him: if you free him, he'll appear later to help you in the Nelson boss fight.

BASEBALL

Year Publisher Developer

1989 Nintendo Intelligent Systems

MUCH LIKE THE early NES game of the same name, this Game Boy launch title is a basic but cheery take on baseball. There are two modes to choose from – USA mode and Japan mode – with the main difference being the rosters. While each mode only offers two teams called the White Bears and Red Eagles, if you play in USA mode the players have names like Mike, Joe and Eddie, whereas in Japan mode they're called Waka, Michi, Kado and the like. The Japan mode also plays a little faster, but most players will prefer USA mode, if only because the starting pitchers for each team are called Mario and Luigi (even if they don't look like Nintendo's mascots). ■

FACT

While the game's Japanese box art shows a cartoon of generic baseball players, the western box art shows Mario throwing a pitch, suggesting it is actually him in the game.

BASES LOADED

Year Publisher Developer 1990 Jaleco TOSE

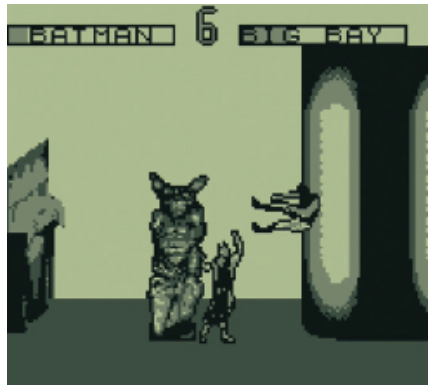
DESPITE ITS NAME, this isn't actually a proper entry in the Bases Loaded console series (known as Moero!! Pro Yakyuu in Japan). Instead, it's a port of Japanese Game Boy title Baseball Kids, and as the name suggests it features cute chibi-style characters instead of the more realistically proportioned players in the NES Bases Loaded games. Oddly, just like Nintendo's own Baseball title on Game Boy, Bases Loaded also features USA and Japan modes, with the difference being that in the latter the CPU can throw some wilder pitches. You can only play exhibition games, and there are only two teams to choose from – East and West – each with made-up player names. ■

FACT

The manual contains each fictional player's stats. The best batter in the game is Wolf on the East team, who has a .387 batting average.

BATMAN FOREVER

Year 1995
Publisher Acclaim
Developer Probe Entertainment



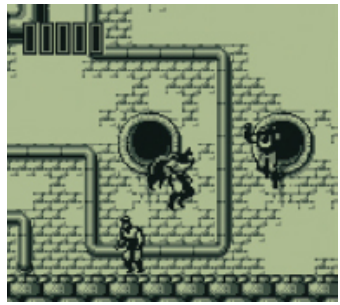
THE CONSOLE VERSIONS of Batman Forever were odd sidescrolling action games that not only featured digitised characters in the style of Mortal Kombat, but also made use of the Mortal Kombat fighting system too. Rather than trying something different, the Game Boy port gamely attempts to replicate it, meaning handheld Batman can also uppercut, sweep and roundhouse like his console brothers. That said, given that the Game Boy version ditches the puzzlesolving elements of the console games, it's more focused on combat. It also has fewer levels with just four areas compared to the eight in the SNES and Mega Drive version: the Second Bank of Gotham City, the circus, an abandoned subway station and Claw Island. ■

FACT

In all versions Batman is played by Bryan Smyj, a stuntman who 17 years later would fittingly end up performing stunts in *The Dark Knight Rises*.

BATMAN: RETURN OF THE JOKER

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Sunsoft Sunsoft



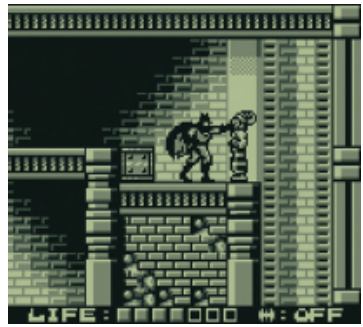
SOMEONE'S BEEN STEALING precious metals from Gotham City's mines, one of which just happens to be a useful material for making explosives. The police are stumped, so it's up to Batman to track down the culprit: and let's face it, we all know who it is. Turns out it's not a very long search because this platformer only consists of four stages: the sewers (where Batman fights Dark Claw), a machine shop (Shogun Warrior), a train (Foul Ball) and finally the mine itself, where the Joker is waiting. In hindsight, he should have just gone straight there first. This is a brief but difficult platformer, with critics bemoaning its frustrating combat and controls. ■

FACT

This game uses a technique used in some other Game Boy games to make water look transparent: by turning it on and off in each frame, the Game Boy screen's blurriness blends it together.

BATMAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES

Year 1993
Publisher Konami
Developer Konami



BASED ON THE popular cartoon of the same name, this action platformer consists of five separate ‘episodes’, each with their own plot and villain. Throughout the game you’ll be stopping the Joker from sending explosive teddy bears to Gotham residents, putting an end to Mr Freeze and the Scarecrow’s evil pact, rescuing Harvey Dent from Poison Ivy (while fighting Catwoman along the way), preventing the Penguin and the Riddler from carrying out a bank heist and finally taking on the Joker one more time. On occasion you get to play as Robin (he’s armed with a slingshot as opposed to Batman’s batarangs) but for the most part this is a Batman adventure (and not a bad one). ■

FACT

This was the only game based on The Animated Series to release before the show changed its name. On other formats it was called The Adventures of Batman and Robin.

BATMAN: THE VIDEO GAME

Year 1990
Publisher Sunsoft
Developer Sunsoft

THE FIRST BATMAN game released on the Game Boy, this is based on the 1989 Tim Burton movie, though only loosely. Ol' Batters has to fight through Gotham City, reach the Chemical Factory, drop Jack Napier into acid, hit the city again, head through the Flugalheim Museum, then enjoy a brief stint in the Batwing before going to Gotham Cathedral for a final one-on-one with the now Joker-fied Napier. Despite having a famously tiny sprite, this Batman is surprisingly nimble and has a huge floaty jump. While this could be a problem in other games, Sunsoft used it to make the game an action platformer with emphasis on the platforming, and as a result it's considered one of the better Batman games. ■

FACT

The game's code has hidden developer messages, including one in which a programmer complains that they were up late playing Tetris the previous night.

BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN

Year Publisher Developer 1996 Laguna / Nintendo Betop

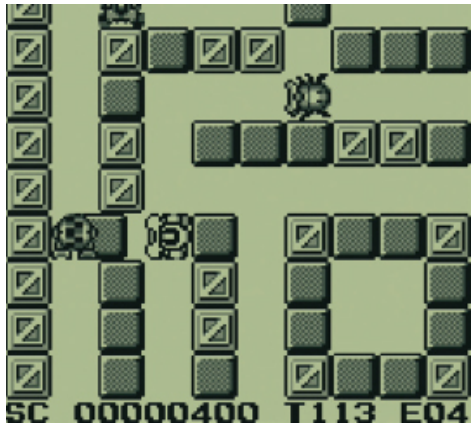
THIS IS A port of the 1995 PlayStation game of the same name, but since the console version was a polygonal 3D fighter it's not a direct copy. Instead, it's a separate 2D fighting game featuring the same eight playable characters. This does mean it lacks the sidestep move the 3D version was credited for bringing to the genre, but as far as Game Boy fighting games go it's competent enough. Each character has their own reason for taking part in the Toshin Daibukai tournament, but some of these motives are different on the Game Boy. For example, in the PS1 version Sofia is looking to recover her lost memories, whereas here she's sad that she doesn't have a boyfriend and is out to 'capture fighting men'. ■

FACT

Play on a Super Game Boy and enter Up, Up, Select, A, Down, Down, Select, B on the title screen to unlock 'Jet Mode', which uses the SNES's extra power to make the game faster.

BATTLE BULL

Year 1991
Publisher SETA Corporation
Developer Jorudan



MINING ROBOTS AT the deep space mining operation on Perseus VI have been infected with a virus that makes them attack anything that enters the mine. It's up to you to enter the mine in a little bulldozer and take out the robots by pushing blocks into them. At first your bulldozer is extremely slow and has to pause to recharge every time you push a block, leaving you open to attack. As you destroy each robot, though, you earn the money it was carrying, enabling you to upgrade your dozer and make it faster, recover quicker and even gain special abilities like jumping or firing weapons. The aim is to clear all 48 stages to 'disinfect' the mine. ■

FACT

When you beat the game it says 'you are the champion' and your character celebrates with his girlfriend, because apparently now it's a contest instead of a clean-up operation.

THE BATTLE OF OLYMPUS

Year Publisher Developer

1993 Imagineer Radical Entertainment

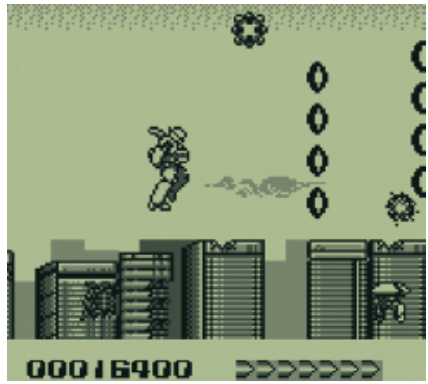
THIS IS A straight port of the NES game, but whereas the console version was released worldwide the Game Boy version was exclusive to Europe. Set in Ancient Greece, you play as Orpheus (though the name can be changed), whose girlfriend Helene has been kidnapped by Hades. You have to visit various Greek gods and win them over so they can give you the powers you need to defeat Hades and rescue Helene. Players familiar with Zelda II: The Adventure of Link may be surprised at just how similar The Battle of Olympus is at times, though obviously the Ancient Greek theme means there's a different vibe throughout. The Game Boy version is a faithful rendition, with the main difference being that it's zoomed in a bit. ■

FACT

The NES version's programming and graphics were created by Yukio Horimoto and Reiko Oshida, a husband and wife team.

BATTLE UNIT ZEOTH

Year Publisher Developer 1991 Jaleco Jaleco



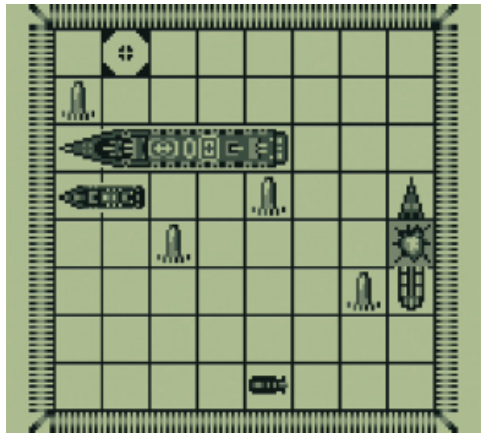
IN THE DISTANT future, Earth prevented an invasion by the Grein, a race of alien robots, but not before the Grein managed to set up a secret underground base filled with robots that could clone themselves. Ten years later the base opened and the Grein launched a new attack, destroying the city of New Age. It's up to you to destroy the Grein in your Battle Unit Zeoth mech: cue a side-scrolling shoot 'em up set over five stages. The most unique aspect of this game is its control method. While you can shoot in four directions, movement is less conventional: you move left and right with the D-Pad but have to press the A button and use the mech's thrusters to move upwards. ■

FACT

The game has a hidden practice mode. Hold Down on the title screen and press A + B the same number of times as the stage you want to practise: you'll be able to take 240 hits.

BATTLESHIP

Year 1992
Publisher Mindscape
Developer Pack-In Video



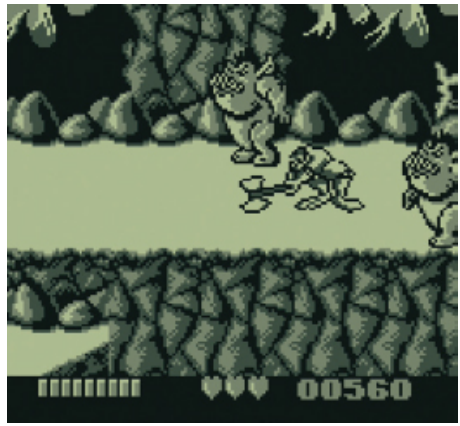
BASED ON THE board game, the Game Boy version of Battleship is a little more complex. The aim is still to lay out your ships on a grid and take turns trying to destroy your opponent's ships, but this time the game consists of 48 stages, each of which gives you a different selection of ship types, ranging from the tiny single-square Submarines to the massive Carriers which take up a 4x2 block. Each ship type also brings its own special weapon to the table, from the submarine's radar (which lets you check a 4x4 space for enemy ships) to the Carrier's F-14 Tomcats (which give you five shots in one turn). None of this stops you being certain the CPU is cheating, of course. ■

FACT

There have been a few themed versions of the Battleship board game, including Star Wars, Pirates of the Caribbean and GI Joe.

BATTLETOADS

Year 1991
Publisher Tradewest
Developer Rare



THE NES VERSION of Battletoads is notorious for its high level of difficulty. This Game Boy title, released five months later, is actually a completely different game, but that doesn't mean it's any easier. You play as Zitz, the leader of the Battletoads, as he tries to rescue his colleagues Rash and Pimple from the clutches of the evil Dark Queen. Like its console brother, Battletoads on the Game Boy mixes up a bunch of genres across its nine stages: most of these are sidescrolling beat 'em up levels, but there's also a shoot 'em up stage in there, as well as levels where you speed through a river on a jet ski, descend a chasm on a rope and blast your way up a tower with a jetpack. ■

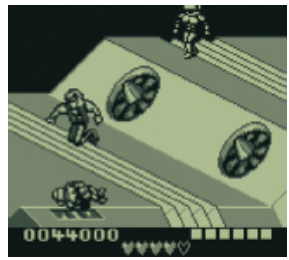
FACT

Zitz's skin is green on the game box, but it was brown in the NES game, light green in later games then bluish-green in Battletoads / Double Dragon. Not that it matters on Game Boy, of course.

BATTLETOADS / DOUBLE DRAGON: THE ULTIMATE TEAM

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Tradewest / Sony

Imagesoft Rare



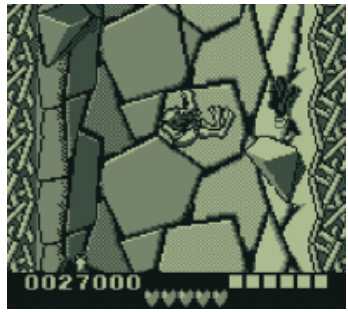
THE ICONIC PAIRING of two of the NES's most popular beat 'em up teams was also brought to the Game Boy, and whereas the first Battletoads game was completely different on Nintendo's handheld this is more of a standard port. Players can choose between all three Battletoads or Billy or Jimmy Lee from the Double Dragon games, as the newly-formed fivesome take on the unholy alliance of the Dark Queen from Battletoads and the Shadow Warriors from Double Dragon. Gameplay is faithful to the console versions: the main differences in the Game Boy version are zoomed-in visuals and the loss of 2-player co-op (which sort of lessens the impact of having two sets of heroes crossing over). ■

FACT

The game's programmer Paul Machacek says it was made with very little input from the Double Dragon IP owners, which is clear: it feels very much like a Battletoads game.

BATTLETOADS IN RAGNAROK'S WORLD

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Tradewest Rare



THE GAME BOY version of Battletoads may have been completely different from the NES one, but that doesn't mean the latter didn't eventually end up on Nintendo's handheld anyway. Battletoads in Ragnarok's World is indeed a port of the NES original, albeit a cutdown version with only seven levels instead of 12. Playing as Rash, you have to rescue Zitz, Pimple and Princess Angelica from the Evil Queen via a series of beat 'em up and vehicle stages. Like its Game Boy brethren, it too ditches 2-player co-op, making this a strictly solo affair, but it at least keeps the extremely high difficulty the NES version boasts. If 'boasts' is the word, given some players find it too hard. ■

FACT

The lack of co-op means the plot has changed. In the NES version it's both Rash and Zitz saving Pimple and the Princess, but now Zitz has been kidnapped too.

BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD

Year Publisher Developer 1998 GT Interactive Torus Games

WHILE ALL THE other Beavis and Butt-Head games were about getting tickets to a Gwar concert, this is instead about the pair trying to join a gang by breaking its leader, Todd, out of jail. The game is a top-down adventure in which players control either Beavis or Butt-Head, depending on the stage, as they break out of detention, escape school, head through the town, the sewers and Burger World before making it to the prison. The game revolves around dodging enemies and carrying out fetch quests: for example, part of the process in escaping school involves finding a remote control for the staff room TV so hippy teacher Mr Van Driessen can be distracted by the pretty colours. ■

FACT

During a US Senate hearing on TV violence, Senator Ernest Hollings accidentally referred to the show as Buffcoat and Beaver. It was later used as a joke in the show.

BEETHOVEN

Year	1994
Publisher	Hi Tech Expressions
Developer	Unexpected Development

BEETHOVEN'S CHILDREN HAVE gone missing! That's the St Bernard dog from the movie series, not the composer. He's come up with a great idea to get them back: he has to head to a construction site, a restaurant, a supermarket, a park and the suburbs and cause as much chaos as possible so he can eventually be taken to the dog pound, where he can then rescue his puppies. Although for the most part this is a standard platformer, there is one gimmick in the form of the 'mayhem' meter. The aim is to fill this in each stage by performing various acts of carnage – knocking rivets out of scaffolding, spilling pepper onto diners, stealing newspapers and the like – to alert the dog catcher. ■

FACT

The legal blurb at the start of the game refers to it as Beethoven's 2nd, implying it was supposed to be a tie-in for the movie of the same name (despite the plots being different).

BEETLEJUICE

Year 1992
Publisher LJN
Developer Rare

BASED ON THE animated Beetlejuice series rather than the movie, this has you playing as the brash bio-exorcist himself. After setting up the Deetz family's home as a hotel for Netherworld monsters to come and visit the land of the living, the Deetz's daughter Lydia is kidnapped by Astoroth and taken back to his hideaway in the Netherworld. It's up to Beetlejuice to rescue her, but before he can do that he needs to clear her house of spectres first. The result is a platformer but one that's more varied than most: as well as numerous boss battles against said spectres there are a few mini-games too, including a face-pulling contest, a Pipemania clone and that mini-game stalwart, a sliding panel puzzle. ■

FACT

The animated series ran for four seasons and 94 episodes. Lydia was voiced by Alyson Court, who went on to voice Claire Redfield in *Resident Evil 2*, and retained the role for 14 years.

BEST OF THE BEST: CHAMPIONSHIP KARATE

Year 1992
Publisher Electro Brain / Loriciels
Developer Loriciels

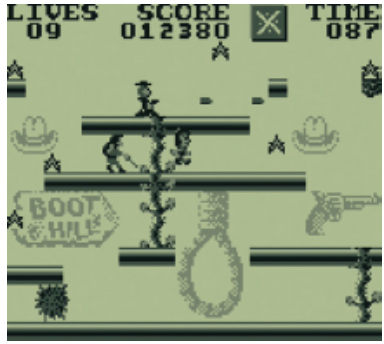
A FAIRLY FAITHFUL port of the fighting game released on numerous home computers and consoles in the early ‘90s, Best of the Best sees you starting off at rank 16 and working your way up the rankings to eventually win the kickboxing championship (despite its name, this is a kickboxing game). There are 16 different moves in the game but you can only select to apply a few of them to your kickboxer, meaning you have to customise their moveset to match your playing style. You can also take part in training sessions to improve your fighter’s stats: these are more fruitful if you do them after winning a fight so the key is alternating between fighting and training. ■

FACT

If you manage to win the championship you’ll be invited to take part in a slightly less by-the-books tournament in a secret location flanked by flaming torches.

BILL & TED’S EXCELLENT GAME BOY ADVENTURE

Year 1991
Publisher LJN
Developer Beam Software



THE EVIL CHUCK De Nomolos has stolen time fragments and scattered them throughout history (‘what are time fragments?’ the manual asks, before answering ‘I dunno’). Up steps time-travelling duo Bill and Ted, who have to visit 10 different periods in time – from Austria in 1805 to Medieval England in 1456 to present day San Dimas – to collect all the time fragments and return them in their phone booth to restore order. The fragments have also transformed some of history’s greatest figures into enemies, so along the way you’ll have to avoid rampaging Abraham Lincolns, Einsteins, Beethovens and Joan of Arcs (Joans of Arc? To quote the manual, ‘I dunno’). ■

FACT

A live-action *Bill and Ted* TV series, starring two relative unknowns in the title roles, aired on Fox in June 1992. It lasted just seven episodes and was off the air by August.

BILL ELLIOTT’S NASCAR FAST TRACKS

Year 1991
Publisher Konami
Developer Distinctive Software

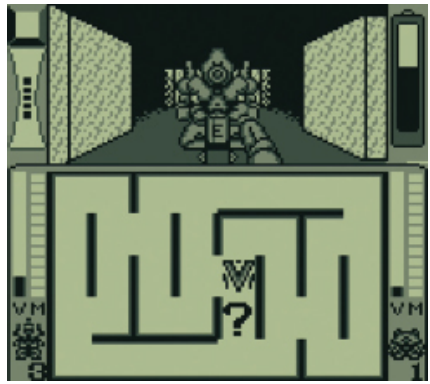
THIS RACING GAME has four titular fast tracks to choose from: two ovals (Daytona and Atlanta) and, just in case you fancy turning right sometimes, two road courses (Sears Point and Watkins Glen). After selecting either an Oldsmobile Cutlass, a Ford Thunderbird or a Chevrolet Lumina, it's off to the track where the action takes place from a first-person perspective with a dashboard that appears to span the entire width of the track as if you were driving a boat instead of a stock car (which can make it a little tricky to judge when you're successfully overtaking). As well as single races there's also a Championship option, where you race through each of the four tracks twice. ■

FACT

Bill Elliott acquired a number of nicknames over the years, from the run-ofthe- mill Wild Bill and Million Dollar Bill to the frankly fantastic Awesome Bill from Dawsonville.

BIONIC BATTLER

Year	1992
Publisher	Electro Brain
Developer	Copya Systems



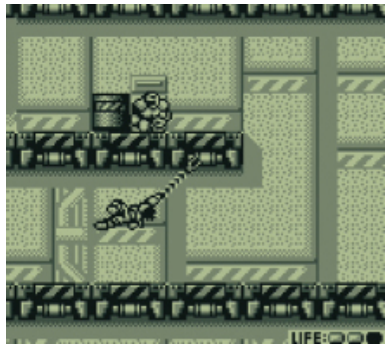
IN THE YEAR 1999, mankind invented the Bionic Construction Robot (BCR), designed to build other worker robots and speed up scientific discoveries. All was well until 13 June 2010, when all the robots suddenly stopped working, thanks to a race of robots who challenged the Earth to a robo-battle to the death. As the Earth's chosen champion, you have to enter a labyrinth and destroy all the robots you can find (often by punching them over and over until they explode). The game is played via a firstperson perspective similar to early dungeon-crawling games, and you can choose between two types of robot: the small but powerful Valiant, or the tall, weak and speedy Sirius. ■

FACT

I hope you have a diverse musical taste, because the three music options available in Bionic Battler are 'country and western', 'Japanese funk' and 'disco'.

BIONIC COMMANDO

Year	1992
Publisher	Capcom
Developer	Minakuchi Engineering



RATHER THAN A straight-up port of the NES version of Bionic Commando, this Game Boy offering is a reimagining of sorts. The plot is generally the same, though some names have changed and it's now set in the future. Playing as Rad Spencer (previously Ladd Spencer), you have to rescue Super Joe from the evil Doraize Army. As in the NES version, this is a platformer with the twist being that you can't jump, and instead have to use your grappling hook to traverse the game's stages. Some of these levels are similar to those on console, but others are completely new to the Game Boy version; and other quality of life tweaks (such as being able to change your weapons mid-level) made it a much-loved retelling. ■

FACT

The hero was called Raddo Supensa in Japan. This was translated to Ladd Spencer for the NES game and Rad Spencer for the Game Boy: the latter has been his name in every game since.

BLACK BASS: LURE FISHING

Year Publisher Developer 1994 Hot B Hot B

THE 8-BIT AND 16-bit days were awash with bass fishing games, and it was no different on Game Boy. There are two lakes in this game, named Clear Lake and Storm Lake (guess what their main characteristics are). While for the most part it's your conventional fishing game, with eight types of lure available for various situations, it does have one gimmick in the form of its Special Techniques menu. This gives you five power-ups to choose from, ranging from being able to let a fish go without losing your lure, to automatically moving the lure to attract fish in the best way, to even automatically pulling fish out of the water when you hook them. ■

FACT

For once, there isn't just bass to catch in this one. You can also catch rainbow trout, northern pike and catfish. The possibilities are endless! (i.e. four.)

BLADES OF STEEL

Year Publisher Developer 1991 Ultra Games / Palcom Konami

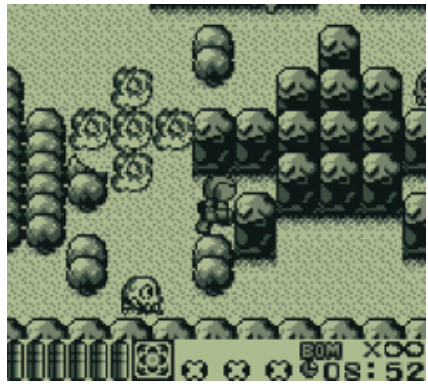
THIS IS A relatively faithful port of the NES version of Konami's ice hockey game, which was released in 1988. There are eight teams to choose from, with four each from Canada (Toronto, Montreal, Edmonton and Vancouver) and the US (New York, Chicago, LA and Minnesota), and players can choose between a one-off exhibition match or a Tournament mode where all eight teams are placed in a simple bracket and you have to win your three games to clinch the championship. One of the most well-loved features in the NES version was the ability to get into fights with your opponents, and that's very much present and accounted for here too, close-up view and all. ■

FACT

At the credits, when character designer Nobuaki Matsumoto's name appears, holding B and pressing A brings up the hidden message 'NEVER GIVE UP'.

BLASTER MASTER BOY

Year Publisher Developer 1991 Sunsoft Sunsoft



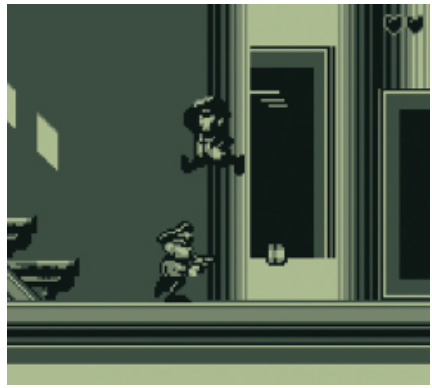
KNOWN IN EUROPE as Blaster Master Jr, this is actually a sequel to NES game Robowarrior (which itself was a spin-off of Bomberman), meaning it's more of a Bomberman game than a Blaster Master one. In the westernised story, you play as Blaster Master hero Jason as he heads underground to stop the evil Plutonium Boss seeping radioactive energy into the world. Conveniently, though, Jason's trademark tank can't fit through the entrance to the underground, meaning he instead has to arm himself with a bunch of bombs (wink wink). The game's nine stages, then, have you dropping explosives Bombermanstyle to defeat enemies on your way to your encounter with the Plutonium Boss. ■

FACT

The sequel situation is far more straightforward in Japan, where Robowarrior is known as Bomber King and Blaster Master Boy is titled Bomber King: Scenario 2.

THE BLUES BROTHERS

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Titus Software Titus Software



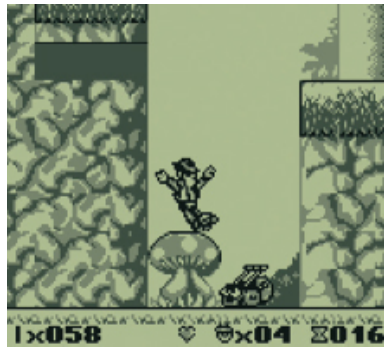
JAKE AND ELWOOD Blues have a problem. They have a concert to play at night but the town sheriff has stolen all their instruments. Cue a mission (from God, no doubt) to retrieve them all in time for the gig. This platformer consists of five stages, each of which contains a piece of the Blues' equipment: there's a guitar in the department store, headphones at the warehouse, a microphone at the jailhouse, a speaker in the sewer and a spotlight at a construction site. You can choose to play as either Jake or Elwood but there's no difference in how they play, just how they look: both can run, jump and pick up and throw boxes at enemies with equal levels of competence. ■

FACT

The Blues Brothers movie briefly held the world record for the most cars destroyed during filming (103). It was overtaken two years later by *Gone in 60 Seconds II*, which wrecked 150 cars and a plane.

THE BLUES BROTHERS: JUKEBOX ADVENTURE

Year	*Publisher*	*Developer*
1994	Titus Software	Titus Software



IN MUCH THE same way as Battletoads in Ragnarok's World was in fact a port of the NES Battletoads, Jukebox Adventure isn't a brand new game and is instead a port of the Blues Brothers game on the SNES. On their way to their concert, Jake and Elwood are trapped by an evil jukebox which for some reason has a bunch of different locations inside it, including a sewer, a garden, a jail and so on. Although it may sound a little similar to the other Blues Brothers game on the Game Boy, the platforming mechanics are different, as is your means of attack: whereas the first game had you picking up crates and throwing them, here you collect and throw records instead. ■

FACT

The SNES version has two-player co-op but the Game Boy one doesn't, meaning handheld players will never know the joy of picking up and throwing their pal.

BO JACKSON: TWO GAMES IN ONE

Year Publisher Developer 1991 THQ Equilibrium

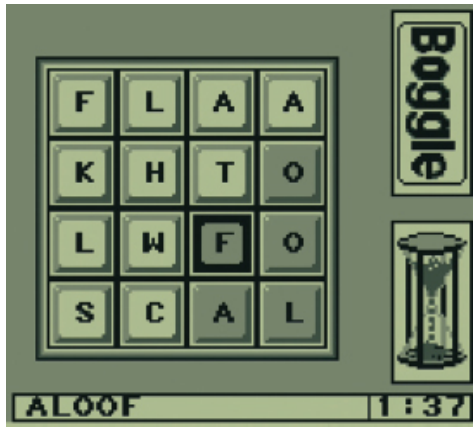
BO JACKSON IS the only professional athlete to have been named an All-Star in both American football and baseball, and for a few years was actually on the rosters of MLB's Kansas City Royals and the NFL's LA Raiders at the same time. This game attempts to capitalise on Jackson's accomplishment by including an American football game and a baseball game on one cartridge. It's a bit of a Jackson of all trades situation, though, as each game is extremely basic, both in terms of visuals and features. Baseball offers exhibition games with seven teams to choose from, while American football only gives you two teams (East and West). The latter does at least let you create your own plays, but only mid-game, oddly. ■

FACT

Every now and then Bo pops up to give you advice. If you're caught by a double play in baseball, for example, he says 'Hey, it happens.' Thanks for the insight, Bo.

BOGGLE PLUS

Year 1992
Publisher Parker Brothers
Developer Sculptured Software



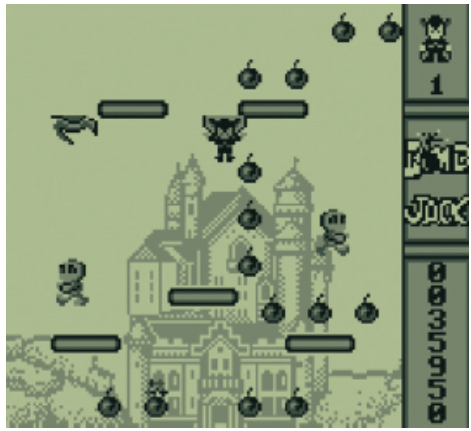
THE CLASSIC WORD game is recreated digitally in this handheld interpretation. As in the actual game, players are given a 4x4 grid of letters and have three minutes to make as many words of three or more letters as they can. The ‘Plus’ in the title refers to the fact there are five different variations on the cart: standard Boggle, Big Boggle (where the grid is 5x5 and words must be at least four letters long), Anagrams (where you’re given a handful of letters and there’s only one solution), Categories (where you have to find a set number of themed words) and Use All (the hardest game, where you have to clear the board of all 25 letters). ■

FACT

The game has a built-in dictionary so it’ll question any made-up words that aren’t in there, but if you’re sure it’s right (or you’re a cheat) you can tell the game it’s legit.

BOMB JACK

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Infogrames Bit Managers



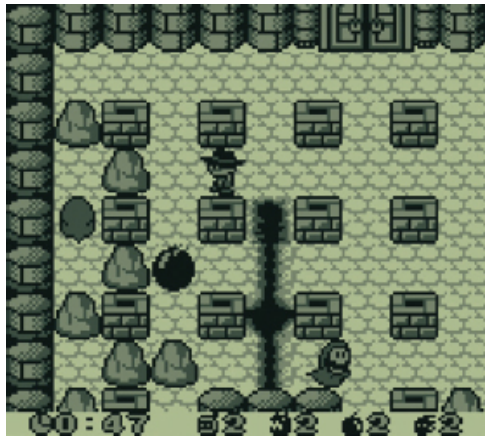
BOMB JACK WAS originally released in arcades in 1984, and this Game Boy version is a pretty accurate recreation. Each of the game's 60 stages takes place on a single screen, and each has a bunch of bombs littered around. It's up to Jack – a little superhero chap who can jump extremely high – to clear all the bombs by picking them up while avoiding enemies. Pro players can get a higher score by looking for the bomb with a lit fuse: there's only one of these at any time and it gives more points. Each stage, then, has an optimal sequence in which each bomb you collect is lit, leading to massive scores if you can nail them all. ■

FACT

The reason Bomb Jack is a superhero is because he's actually collecting the bombs to prevent an evildoer from blowing up a series of world landmarks.

BOMBERMAN GB

Year 1998
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Shimada Kikaku



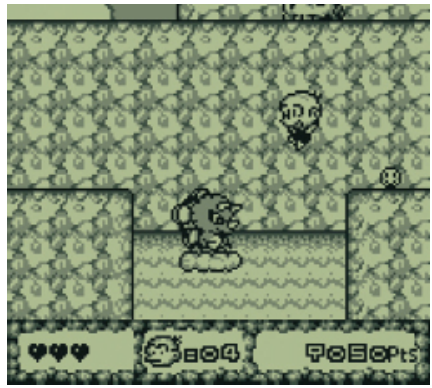
BOMBERMAN ARRIVES AT a new land in search of the legendary Ring of Wishes. Just as he finds it, the floor gives way and he ends up trapped in an enormous cave. The aim, naturally, is to get out of the cave and grab the Ring. Bomberman GB consists of 48 stages split into eight worlds, and each world features two 'modes' which changes the way they're played. In the first world, for example, Mode A involves simply clearing all the enemies in each stage but Mode B has the player clearing them in a certain order. There's also a classic multiplayer battle mode for 1–4 players, but not with a Link Cable: only on the SNES via the Super Game Boy. ■

FACT

This is actually the second game in the series (it's known as Bomberman GB 2 in Japan). The first was released in the west as Wario Blast, which can be found elsewhere in this book.

BONK'S ADVENTURE

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Hudson Soft Hudson Soft



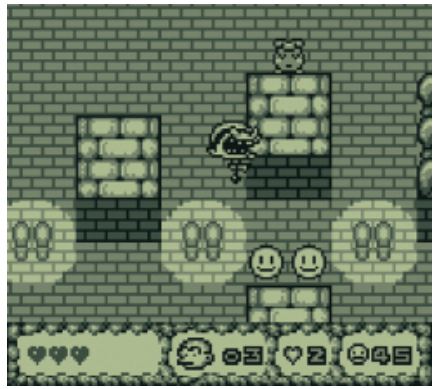
DESPITE HAVING THE same name as Bonk's 1989 TurboGrafx-16 debut (and its NES port), this is actually a completely different platformer starring the baldy caveboy. Bonk's old rival King Drool has taken over Dinosaur Land and has kidnapped the Moon Princess, so off Bonk goes to put things right. As in previous Bonk games, our hero's oversized head is used in most of his attacks, from his standard headbutt move to his 'Grand Bonk', a ground pound move which sees him flipping forwards in mid-air and landing head-first on enemies. By collecting meat, Bonk can not only gain temporary invincibility, but also gets new powers, such as the ability to create huge tremors by Grand Bonking the ground. ■

FACT

Japan got a 3-in-1 cartridge containing the first two Game Boy games and GB Genjin Land, a Bonk-themed mini-game collection that was only released in Japan.

BONK'S REVENGE

Year 1994
Publisher Hudson Soft
Developer



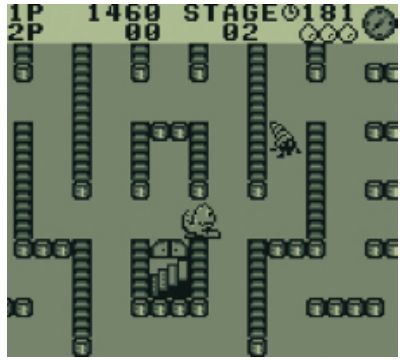
AI ONCE AGAIN, ALTHOUGH there was a console game called Bonk's Revenge, this Game Boy offering is an entirely original adventure. After heading off on a trip to the moon, Bonk barely gets time to get used to the gravity before he hears an enormous explosion. Turns out King Drool has caused a huge earthquake back on Earth, so Bonk has to cut his vacation short and sort him out. A new addition to this game is the Meat Roulette system, in which eating meat gives Bonk one of three random abilities: Stealth Bonk (where he can sneak into secret rooms), Master Bonk (where he's more powerful) or Hungry Bonk (where he bites enemies instead of headbutting them). ■

FACT

Bonk's Revenge includes a bonus stage where you fight Mechabonk, a new character who's quite blatantly an 'homage' to Robocop.

BOOMER'S ADVENTURE IN ASMIK WORLD

Year 1990
Publisher Asmik Corp of America
Developer Dual



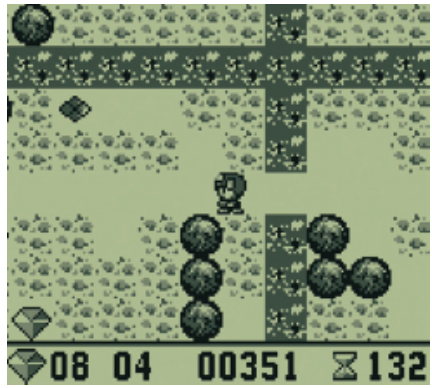
LONG BEFORE THE term ‘boomer’ became an insult for people as old as this author (usually because we know what’s good for you young bucks), there was a different Boomer: a young warrior who lived in Asmik World, a peaceful land inhabited by people who’ve evolved from dinosaurs. When the evil Lord Zoozoon sets up a giant tower in Asmik World and shrouds the land in darkness and rain, Boomer steps up to save the day. The aim is to play through all 64 stages by finding the hidden key in each one and using it to unlock the door to the next stage. To protect himself, Boomer can also dig holes which enemies can fall into. ■

FACT

You actually meet the final boss halfway through the game, after Stage 32. Once you beat him, you have to go back down the tower, which means replaying all 32 stages in reverse order.

BOULDER DASH

Year 1990 *Publisher* Nintendo *Developer* Beam Software



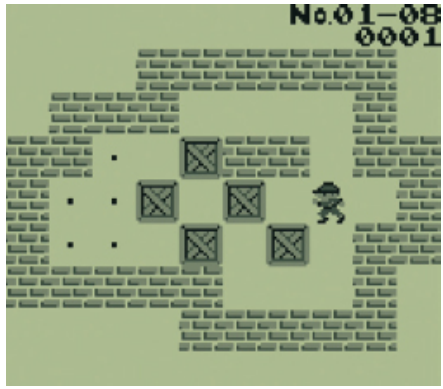
BASED ON THE popular home computer game, Boulder Dash follows a young chap called Rockford as he makes his way through 20 cave systems in an attempt to claim the treasure they contain. There are four themed worlds – underground, Arctic, jungle and ocean – each with five large stages, and the aim is to collect a set number of gems in each stage then reach the exit without either being trapped, squashed or killed by an enemy. The game's main gimmick is its use of gravity: as you dig out the ground underneath rocks and gems, they can tumble down or to the side (which at times can lead to huge chain reactions). The game features a close view and a zoomed-out one, which can be toggled by hitting Select.

FACT

In the original Boulder Dash game, created by Canadian developers Peter Liepa and Chris Gray, Rockford was an ant. He was redesigned as a human for this version.

BOXXLE

Year 1990
Publisher FCI
Developer Atelier Double



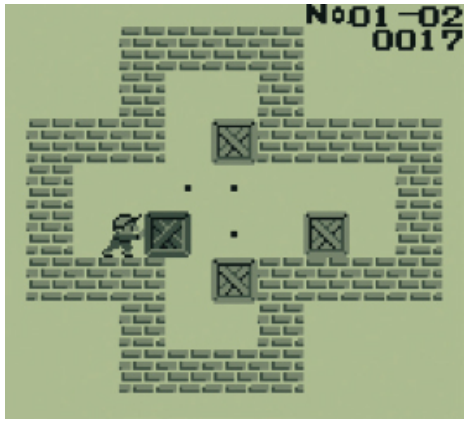
WILLY IS TRYING to win over the girl of his dreams but he doesn't have the money he (thinks he) needs to impress her. Such shallowness has led to Willy getting a job in a warehouse, where his role is to move boxes around. If he can last in the job for long enough (i.e. if you can clear 108 stages) he'll earn enough money to woo his would-be lady friend. Known in Japan as Sokoban, Boxxle is one of the earlier examples of the box-pushing puzzle you may have seen as a mini-game in other titles. You have to move each box to a set location in each stage, but since Willy can only push and can't pull you have to make sure they don't get stuck. ■

FACT

You can unlock a Sound Test by entering the password 3947. In the Japanese version, the password is the hiragana characters for 'Tomizawa', referring to chief composer Kenichi Tomizawa.

BOXXLE II

Year 1992
Publisher FCI
Developer Atelier Double



WILLY'S PLAN WORKED out in the first Boxxle, and he's now very much paired up with his dream lady Wanda. One night, when the pair are out for a date on the boardwalk, Wanda is captured by aliens and taken deep into outer space. Willy decides to buy a rocket so he can go into space and rescue her, but rockets don't come cheap so it's time for some overtime at the box factory. Boxxle II is basically the same as the first game, offering 120 new stages for players who mastered the first batch. It even has a Create mode, like its predecessor, in which players can make their own Boxxle stages: and, as before, these created stages can't be saved. ■

FACT

At the end of the game it turns out Wanda has become the princess of the aliens' planet, and you're asked to rule the world with her. If you choose No you get the final 120th level.

BRAIN DRAIN

Year Publisher Developer 1998 Acclaim / Bandai Visual Impact

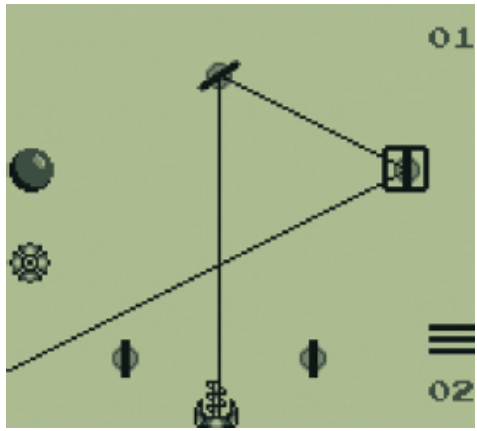
THIS RATHER DIFFICULT puzzle game consists of 100 stages, each containing a number of objects on a grid. The aim is to shuffle these objects around so they match a smaller picture on the corner of the screen. What makes this difficult is the only way to move pieces around is with your cursor, which is a 2x2 square. By placing the cursor and pressing a button you can rotate the items in that square, making it a sort of rotating take on a traditional sliding puzzle. Occasionally you'll come across some gimmicks to make things even harder, such as reversed controls, objects suddenly turning by themselves or some of the objects being hidden by question marks. ■

FACT

If the sliding puzzle connection wasn't obvious enough, the game's bonus stages have you literally rotating sections of a jumbled-up picture to arrange its pieces in the right way.

BRAINBENDER

Year	1991
Publisher	Electro Brain / Gremlin
Developer	Gremlin Graphics



ANOTHER TRICKY PUZZLER, Brainbender presents you with a laser firing in a straight line. By rotating mirrors on each stage, you can change the path of the laser, with the aim being to hit a satellite on each stage and destroy it. This is much easier said than done, because some stages require you to also destroy objects in order to clear the path for the laser. What's more, you only have a limited time to clear each stage, and if you turn the mirror in a way that the laser points back at itself, you'll do damage and cause the timer to drop rapidly. There are 120 stages to play through in total, and they'll likely take you a while. ■

FACT

The difficulty select screen says 'Brianbender' at the top. Given the name of the publisher you'd think they'd be able to spell 'brain'.

BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA

Year 1993
Publisher Sony Imagesoft
Developer Probe Entertainment

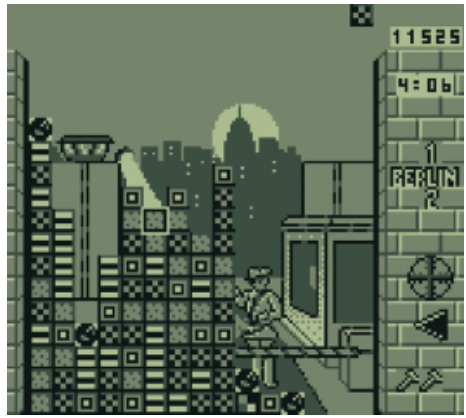
THERE WERE NUMEROUS video game adaptations of Francis Ford Coppola's 1992 gothic horror movie, and the Game Boy version is based on Probe Entertainment's NES interpretation. Playing as Jonathan Harker, you have to make your way through a variety of locations from the movie (including Transylvania, Castle Dracula, the Hillingham Estate mansion and the Carfax Abbey crypt) as you take on a selection of enemies. Along the way, Jonathan can collect various weapons, from the humble rock to axes, flaming torches and the ultimate weapon, the 'triple rock'. Although the NES version has a higher resolution, the Game Boy port zooms the action in to ensure no detail is lost. ■

FACT

Keanu Reeves has said he wasn't happy with his performance in the movie, claiming he was too tired after shooting loads of other movies in a row and 'didn't have anything left to give'.

BREAKTHRU!

Year	1995
Publisher	Spectrum Holobyte
Developer	Realtime Associates



ALSO RELEASED ON other formats, BreakThru is a puzzle game where you have to destroy a wall by removing the bricks that comprise it. If you select one brick, all its neighbouring bricks of the same colour are removed too, and a brick can only be removed if it's next to at least one brick of the same colour. You'll note the word 'colour' has been used twice, which may raise some questions, but as you can see by the screenshot the obvious issue here is resolved by giving each brick a different pattern, similar to the blocks in Tetris. BreakThru is fairly basic, and was always going to struggle to compete on a handheld that boasted the best puzzle game ever. ■

FACT

Tetris creator Alexey Pajitnov appears on the front and back of the box to hype up the game, saying: 'BreakThru is a wonderful game, you'll love it as much as I do.'

BUBBLE BOBBLE

Year 1991 *Publisher* Taito *Developer* Taito

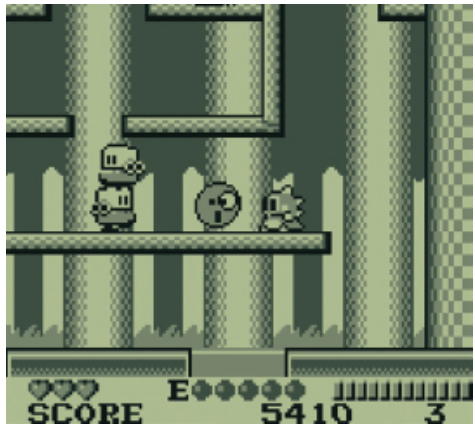
THE ORIGINAL ARCADE version of Bubble Bobble (and most of its ports) consist of a large number of singlescreen stages. Since the Game Boy's resolution couldn't fit these stages on the screen, each of the 200 levels here are instead zoomed in, with scrolling added. What's more, most of these levels are original and there's a new plot: playing as Bub, you have to enter the Cave of Monsters and find the Moon Water, which will turn your brother Bob human again. It does at least play like the arcade version, in which enemies are defeated by spitting large bubbles at them, trapping them in said bubbles, then popping them before they can wriggle free. ■

FACT

Each time you beat a boss a door will appear which lets you collect an item. If you don't get all the items, you can't get the 'good ending' where Bob becomes human.

BUBBLE BOBBLE PART 2

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Taito OLM / Taito



KNOWN IN JAPAN as Bubble Bobble Junior, this has very little to do with the version of Bubble Bobble Part 2 released on the NES, in that the levels are completely different. In the Game Boy version, you play as a new character called Robby who has to rescue a bunch of villagers from ‘the evil king Great Skall’ (which is a mistranslation of his Japanese name Great Skel, hence his skull face). Like its predecessor, the game’s 80 stages scroll to ensure no detail is lost. Robby has two new moves up his sleeve: the ability to charge a ‘super bubble’, which can capture three enemies at once, and the ability to encase himself in a bubble, allowing him to float upwards. ■

FACT

While most ‘Bubble Dragons’ in the series are usually humans afflicted with a curse, Robby has willingly changed into one and can change back whenever he feels like it.

BUBBLE GHOST

Year Publisher Developer 1990 FCI Opera House

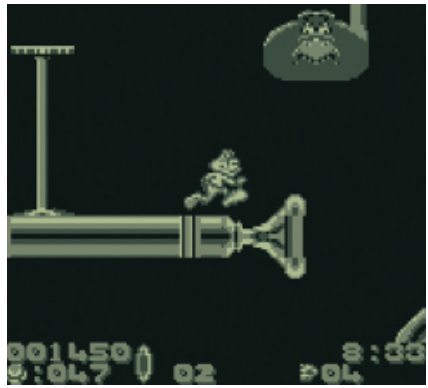
THIS QUIRKY ACTION puzzle game tells the story of a ghost who loves playing with bubbles. This ghost lives in an old castle full of dangerous hallways that are no place for a bubble. It's up to the ghost, then, to guide his beloved bubble out of the castle by blowing it through its 35 halls, avoiding the numerous walls and obstacles that threaten to pop it. Controlling the ghost, you have to position yourself behind the bubble and press A to blow it in the direction you're facing. Along the way you'll encounter certain hazards that your breath can also manipulate, the most obvious example being candles that can be blown out to provide safe passage for your bubble. ■

FACT

In the original Atari ST version, developer Christophe Andréani's head appears in level 13. If you blow into his ear, his glasses fall off.

BUBSY II

Year 1994
Publisher Accolade / Telstar
Developer Accolade



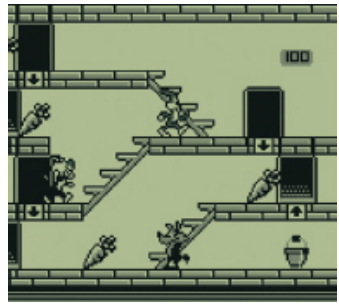
BASED ON THE SNES and Mega Drive game of the same name, this handheld port follows the same story: Bubsy has to travel through all the virtual worlds in the Amazatorium theme park on his way to finding and defeating the evil Oinker P Hamm. As in the console versions the player can choose any order to take on the game's stages, but given the Game Boy's limitations there are fewer levels on the handheld, with only Egypt, Music and Aerial themed stages (dropping the Space and Medieval ones as a result). It does at least retain some of the side-scrolling shoot 'em up stages, though ultimately critics flagged the game's rough performance and blurry visuals. ■

FACT

A Game Gear version of Bubsy II was also in development but was never released. At the time of writing, the prototype has never surfaced online beyond a few screenshots.

THE BUGS BUNNY CRAZY CASTLE

Year 1990
Publisher Kemco
Developer Kotobuki Systems



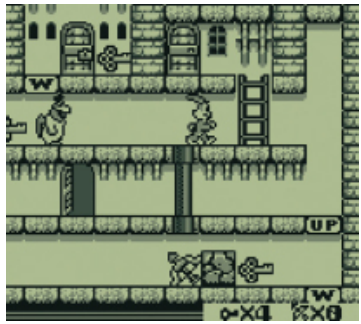
THE CRAZY CASTLE series has a convoluted history covering a wide range of characters. In Japan the first Game Boy version was named Mickey Mouse, but in the west it was instead based on Warner Bros' mascot Bugs Bunny. Bugs's girlfriend Honey Bunny has been trapped in a castle by Daffy Duck, Yosemite Sam, Sylvester and Wile E. Coyote, so he has to get through its 80 rooms, collecting carrots along the way. Bugs can't jump so he has to rely on doors and stairs to get around, and can only defend himself with the weapons lying around. Some, like the boxing glove, can be collected and used whenever you see fit. Others, like safes and crates, have to be pushed around and dropped on heads. ■

FACT

In *Space Jam: A New Legacy*, a young LeBron James is given a Game Boy with The Bugs Bunny Crazy Castle in it. It distracts him enough to make him lose a game of basketball.

THE BUGS BUNNY CRAZY CASTLE 2

Year 1991
Publisher Kemco
Developer Kotobuki Systems



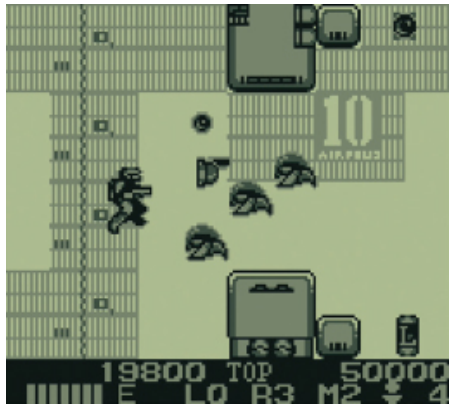
THE SECOND CRAZY Castle game (which, you guessed it, was called Mickey Mouse II in Japan) is the same idea but has more complex stages. This time Honey Bunny has been trapped in Witch Hazel's castle, and this time the player has to get through all 28 rooms by collecting eight keys in each to unlock the door leading to the next stage. This time Bugs can enter doors which lead to separate rooms, making the stages somewhat more elaborate, and there's also a wider range of enemies including the likes of Foghorn Leghorn, Taz and Beaky Buzzard. In Europe the game was instead released as Mickey Mouse and Hugo (depending on the region), both of which are found elsewhere in this book. ■

FACT

Bugs Bunny fans in Japan would finally get the two Bugs Bunny Crazy Castle games in 1997 with the 2-in-1 Game Boy cart Bugs Bunny Collection.

BURAI FIGHTER DELUXE

Year Publisher Developer 1991 Taxan



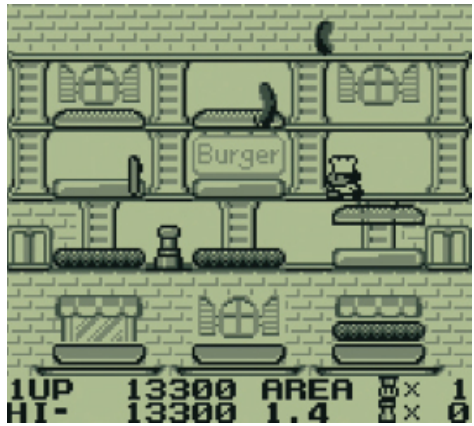
KID A PORT OF NES game Burai Fighter, this ‘Deluxe’ version is actually missing some stages but is nevertheless a relatively faithful conversion. As an unnamed soldier armed with a ‘proton pack’ (i.e. a jetpack) and a laser cannon, you have to infiltrate the five bases of the Burai, an intelligent alien race who’ve created armies of robo-mutants with the aim to take over the entire galaxy. The game is a side-scrolling shoot ‘em up that lets you fire in eight directions. By holding the A button down you can lock your fire in one direction while continuing to move in others, and you can eventually collect power-ups which let you auto-fire to the right while aiming in other directions. ■

FACT

If you have a Game Boy Color you may want to get the improved port, which for some reason was renamed Space Marauder (and is naturally found later in this book).

BURGERTIME DELUXE

Year 1991 *Publisher* Data East *Developer* Data East



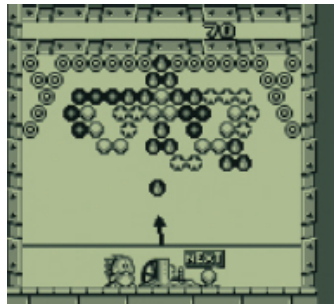
WHILE BURAI FIGHTER'S 'Deluxe' is a bit of a misnomer given it's a pared down port, BurgerTime Deluxe is misleading for the opposite reason. Rather than a Game Boy port of Data East's classic 1982 arcade game, this is actually a fully fledged sequel with far more levels (24 compared to the original's six), more enemies and more power-ups. As in the first game, you play as chef Peter Pepper as he tries to prepare hamburgers by dropping their huge ingredients down to the bottom of the screen, all while avoiding the nasty Food Foes trying to stop him. They can be stunned with pepper, or outright defeated by dropping ingredients onto their heads. ■

FACT

In 2019, a reimagining of the series called BurgerTime Party was released on the Switch, offering a more cartoon-like art style.

BUST-A-MOVE 2: ARCADE EDITION

Year 1998
Publisher Acclaim
Developer Crawfish / Probe



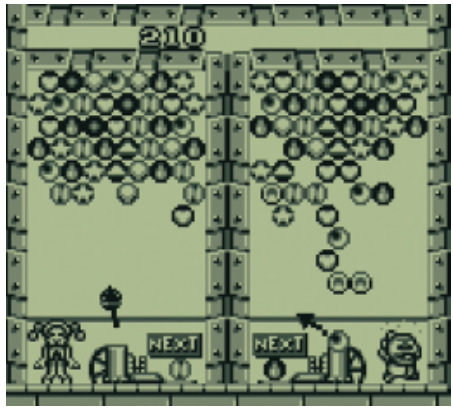
BUST-A-MOVE WAS A puzzle spin-off of Taito's Bubble Bobble, and would eventually become just as popular (if not even more so) than the game it was based on. Sequels arrived *en masse* on a variety of systems, including the Game Boy. It was an interesting move given the game's colour-focused gameplay – players have to fire bubbles upwards in an attempt to match up (and therefore pop) bubbles of the same colour. Luckily, the bubbles in Bust-a-Move also had different patterns as well as different colours, so these patterns were accentuated for the Game Boy version, arguably making it even more accessible for colour blind players. As well as an Arcade mode where you clear numerous stages, there's a vs CPU battle mode. ■

FACT

During his games journalism days, *Black Mirror* writer Charlie Brooker gave the PC version of Busta- Move 2 a score of 30%, telling readers to 'buy the Game Boy version instead'.

BUST-A-MOVE 3 DX

Year 1998
Publisher Taito
Developer Crawfish / Probe



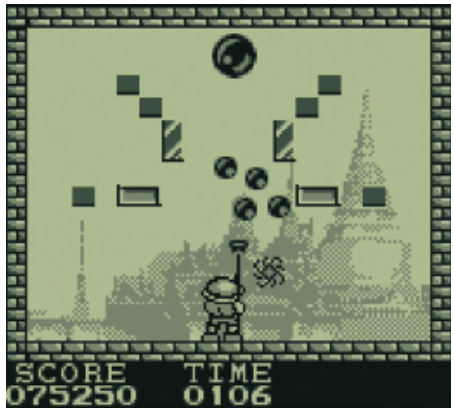
THE GAME BOY version of the third Bust-a-Move game was only released in Europe, which is a shame for American players because it offers more than its predecessors. A new Challenge mode gives players certain conditions for clearing each round, while the vs CPU mode now lets you choose from a selection of characters. The story goes that the mischievous Dunk has cast a spell that's transported characters from other game worlds to Bubble World, though these games are all fictional Taito 'titles'. So there's a Ryu-like fighting game character from the non-existent Taito Musashi Fight, a card-dealing character from a fake poker game, a doll from a made-up arcade crane game and the like. ■

FACT

The only character from a real Taito game (other than Bub and Bob from Bubble Bobble of course) is Sonic Blast Man, from the arcade punch bag game of the same name.

BUSTER BROTHERS

Year 1993
Publisher Hudson Soft
Developer Hudson Soft



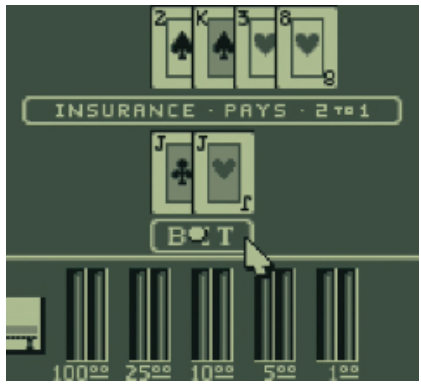
KNOWN IN EUROPE as Pang, this popular arcade game has appeared on a number of systems over the years. The Game Boy version is similar to the others in that you play as one of the Buster Bros – despite the title the handheld port only has a single-player mode – as they travel round the world popping bubbles with their big harpoon gun thing. In a similar vein to Asteroids, every time you pop a bubble it splits into two smaller ones, then shooting those splits them into even smaller ones. Unlike Asteroids, though, gravity is very much present, meaning the bubbles are constantly bouncing around. Given that one touch can kill you, things can get pretty tricky in this one. ■

FACT

The game has a nearly complete two-player co-op mode in its code, which can be activated with a bit of hackery (there are guides online).

CAESARS PALACE

Year Publisher Developer 1991 Arcade Systems / Ocean
Magnin and Associates



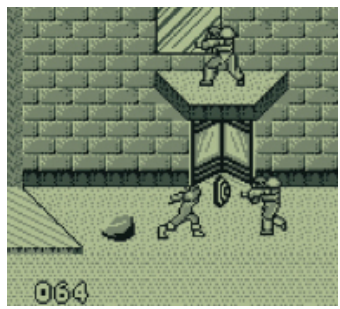
ACCORDING TO ITS manual, the Game Boy recreation of iconic Las Vegas casino Caesars Palace is 'a royal wonderland that will dazzle you with unparalleled excitement and challenge your every skill with games of chance'. The difference between skill and chance aside, it's an ever so slightly hyperbolic claim for a compilation consisting of five games: Video Poker, Slot Machines, Blackjack, Roulette and the Big Six Money Wheel. Players are given $1,000 and have to make as much money as possible by traipsing around from area to area, chucking their chips at things and crossing their fingers a lot. If you run out of money there's no loan ability as in some other casino games: it's Game Over, buddy. ■

FACT

Programmer Ed Magnin would return to the casino genre 17 years later when he programmed Vegas Casino and Vegas Casino High 5 on the DS.

CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE AVENGERS

Year Publisher Developer 1994 Mindscape Realtime Associates



WHEREAS THE NES version of Captain America was nothing to do with the 1991 Data East arcade beat 'em up, the Game Boy version is indeed based on the coinop. That's not to say it's an authentic recreation, however: while players can choose between all four characters from the arcade game (Captain America, Iron Man, Hawkeye and Vision), the game no longer lets players move in all directions as you'd expect from a typical beat 'em up. Instead, all the action is limited to a single plane, meaning the game essentially turns into an action platformer, albeit one where the platforms are few and far between. Reception was mild, but there were worse games on the handheld. ■

FACT

Although dying in the game sees you continuing your next life from the point where you died, if you die during a boss fight the boss's life is completely replenished.

CASINO FUNPAK

Year Publisher Developer 1995 Interplay Beam Software

THE FOURTH OF Beam Software and Interplay's FunPak games (see the 4-in- 1 FunPak entries at the start of the book), it should come as no surprise that Casino FunPak focuses solely on the sort of gambling games that wouldn't look out of place in Vegas. There are five games to choose from: as well as a slot machine, there's also Roulette, Blackjack, Craps and a five-card draw variation of Video Poker. Somewhat uniquely for casino games of its era, there's also a Tournament mode, where you can play each of the games in succession. Each game can be played for as long as you want, and when you move onto the next game all your earnings (or losses) are carried over. ■

FACT

The game's music was composed by Marshall Parker, who would go on to become the audio director on the Assassin's Creed series from 2014's Assassin's Creed Unity onwards.

CASPER

Year Publisher Developer

1996 Natsume / Laguna Bonsai Entertainment

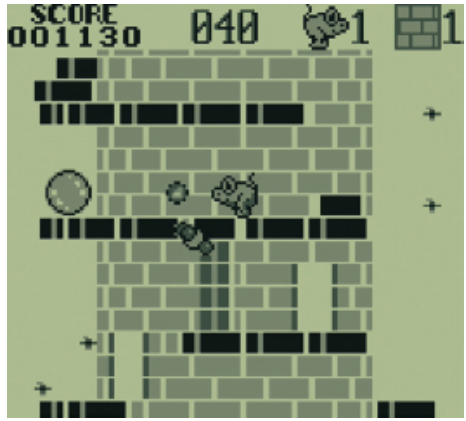
BASED ON THE 1995 movie, the Game Boy adaptation of Casper is a mini-game compilation in which Casper has to make his way from the attic of Whipstaff Manor to the basement. There are four main minigames: a shooting gallery in which Casper has to shoot his ghost uncles to prevent them reaching containers of ooze, a Lode Runner style game where Casper has to collect ooze while digging holes in the floor to trap his uncles, one where Casper has to catch falling books, and a puzzle game where you have to place certain objects to complete a working Rube Goldberg-style machine. All four have to be completed numerous times, then at the end there's a minecart ride and a basic Simon Says game before the credits roll.

FACT

The Lode Runner style game is called Ooze Runner, in case it wasn't obvious enough that it 'borrows' from it.

CASTELIAN

Year Publisher Developer 1991 Triffix / The Sales Curve Bits Studios



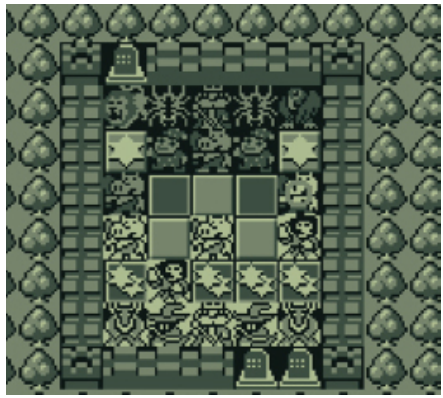
KNOWN ON OTHER formats as Nebulus and Tower Toppler, Castelian tells the story of Julius, a frog-like creature who lives on the island nation of Jemmerville. One day, seven alien towers surround the island, and it appears its precious gem deposits are in danger of being pilfered. It's up to Julius, then, to climb all seven towers (and an eighth that turns up later) and reach the top of each so he can detonate his D-Bomb to demolish it. Although at its core it's a basic platformer, Castelian's main gimmick is that each stage rotates around the tower, giving the impression that you're ascending a rotating 3D cylindrical structure. It's an impressive effect given the Game Boy's technical limitations. ■

FACT

The Japanese version is called Kyoro-Chan Land, and stars a funnylooking bird thing as the protagonist instead.

CASTLE QUEST

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Hudson Soft Hudson Soft



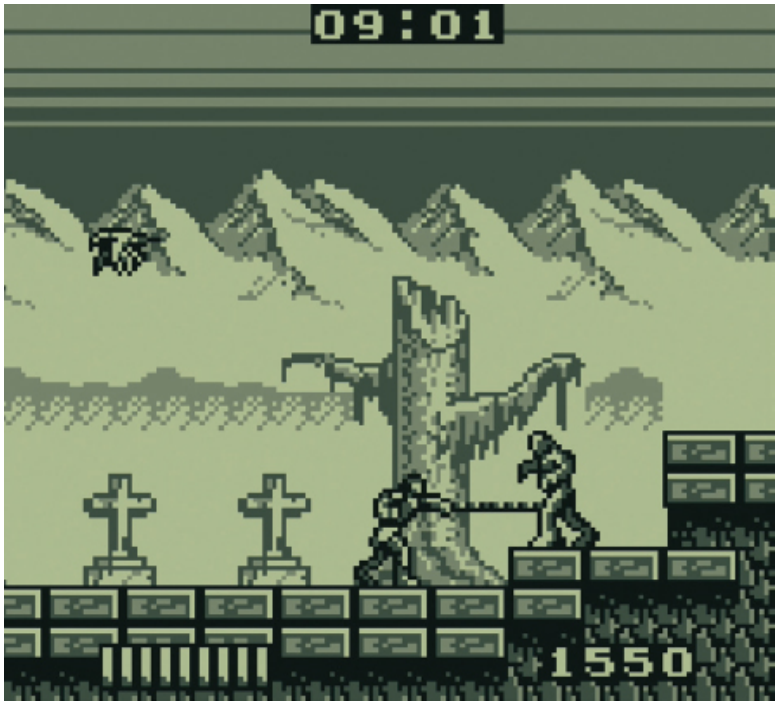
NOT TO BE confused with the completely unrelated NES game Castlequest, this is a curious mix of chess and a turn-based RPG. Each of the game's 25 levels is a different 'castle', with the aim being to overthrow its king. Standard chess pieces are replaced with other characters like pigs and spiders, and when you attempt to 'capture' a piece you're instead taken to a turn-based battle where dice rolls determine how much damage you and your opponent deal out (meaning there's a chance you can survive a capture and even capture an enemy piece instead). Special mention must go to the pig character: when you defeat him, he warns you: 'If you eat me, you will be fat.' ■

FACT

Castle Quest was released on the Famicom in Japan and was planned for a western NES release under the name Triumph but this was ultimately scrapped.

CASTLEVANIA: THE ADVENTURE

Year Publisher Developer 1989 Konami Konami



GIVEN THAT CASTLEVANIA and its sequel were among the best-selling third-party games on the NES, it was inevitable that the monster whip ‘em up series would eventually make the jump to Nintendo’s handheld. The Adventure’s western manual doesn’t give much away but the Japanese manual (and subsequent timeline tweaks by Konami) reveal it to be a prequel to the first Castlevania, taking place 115 years earlier, seeing Simon Belmont’s ancestor Christopher Belmont heading to Dracula’s castle to vanquish him. The game takes place over four stages as Christopher takes on a series of monstrous enemies, with a boss at the end of each level: the armoured Gobanz in Stage 1, a group of grotesque ‘Under Moles’ in Stage 2, the gargoyle-like Death Bat in Stage 3 and Dracula himself at the end of the fourth and final stage. Although it was indeed the first time Castlevania’s whip-based action platforming was available in handheld form, The Adventure would become known as much for its limitations as its accomplishments. Scrolling is quite choppy, Christopher moves rather slowly and the ability to throw secondary weapons like axes and holy water, as in the NES games, isn’t present here. Still, it nevertheless set the

foundation for what would become an important home for the series: many fans to this day believe that some of the finest Castlevania games have been on Nintendo handhelds, most notably the Game Boy Advance and Nintendo DS titles. But those are for future books. ■

FACT

A reboot of the game called Castlevania: The Adventure ReBirth was released as a downloadonly title on the Wii. At the time of writing it hasn't been re-released.

CASTLEVANIA II: BELMONT'S REVENGE

Year Publisher Developer 1991 Konami Konami

THE SECOND HANDHELD Castlevania improves on its predecessor in every way. Set 15 years later, the resurrected Dracula has turned Christopher Belmont's son Soleil into a demon, so it's up to Christopher to whip them both to Hell. This time there are four other castles (stages) that have to be conquered before you get to Dracula's castle, and you can choose the order in which to take them on (Mega Man style). On top of this, the NES games' throwable sub-weapons have finally been added, making the combat feel a little less repetitive. It's generally agreed that of the

three Castlevania games on the Game Boy, Belmont's Revenge is the best of the bunch. ■

FACT

Solieil's name is mistranslated from Japanese as Soleiyu. When the game was re-released on Game Boy Color (see Konami GB Collection Vol 4) it was fixed.

CASTLEVANIA LEGENDS

Year 1998
Publisher Konami
Developer KCE Nagoya

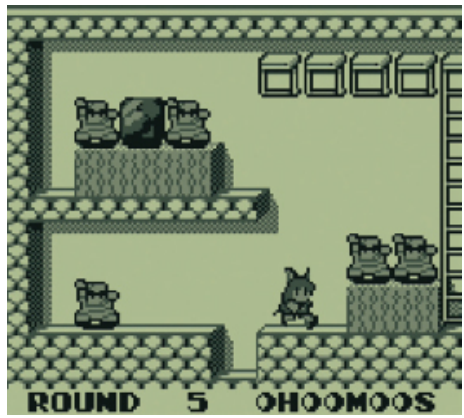
THE THIRD CASTLEVANIA on the Game Boy is another prequel, but this time it's set before any other game in the series and tells the origin story of Dracula and his feud with the Belmont family. Players control 17-yearold Sonia Belmont as she travels across Transylvania to Dracula's Castle to defeat the Count for the first time (but obviously not the last). Sub-weapons have been removed again in Legends, but instead Sonia can collect 'Soul Weapons' from bosses. These special abilities are chosen from a menu when players hit Select, and include such effects as refilling Sonia's health, freezing enemies and killing everything on-screen. It's also slightly less linear: while there's still only one path to the exit, there are now others that branch off and lead to bonuses. ■

FACT

Castlevania series producer Koji Igarashi has called Legends an ‘embarrassment’ and removed it from the official series timeline, meaning poor Sonia is noncanon.

CATRAP

Year 1990
Publisher Asmik Ace Entertainment
Developer Asmik Ace Entertainment



CATRAP MAY LOOK like a platformer but it’s actually a puzzle game. Catboy and Catgirl have been turned into cats by a monster (I mean, they were asking for it with those names) so they have to clear 100 monster-filled stages to break the curse. Each level has a number of enemies who can be defeated by walking into them, but there are various obstacles in the way and the Cat-pair can’t jump, meaning players have to figure out the correct route to take without getting stuck. To avoid frustration, rather than making you restart the level any time you hit a dead end you can instead rewind the action at any time and try a different tactic. ■

FACT

Level 77 is shaped like a giant MZ. This is a reference to the Sharp MZ- 700, the Japanese computer that was home to the original version of Catrap.

CENTIPEDE

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Accolade Accolade

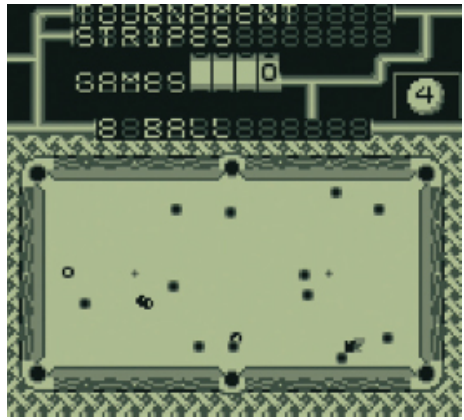
IF YOU'VE BEEN reading this book in order you'll have already seen Arcade Classic 2, which included Game Boy ports of Centipede and Millipede. What you have here is the standalone version of Centipede, the lesser of the two games. In fact, there are two versions of Centipede, and the second one is quite cheeky. Accolade first released it on Game Boy in 1992 (the first version). This then became Arcade Classic 2 in 1995, with Millipede and Super Game Boy support added. Then Majesco took over the licence and re-released Centipede (the second version) in 1998, by simply removing Millipede and the Super Game Boy support again. Both the 1992 Accolade and 1998 Majesco versions, then, are essentially identical. In practice, at least. ■

FACT

I say ‘in practice’ because the Majesco version still has Millipede and the Super Game Boy data on the cartridge, it’s just been blocked off. A Game Genie cheat cartridge can reinstate them.

CHAMPIONSHIP POOL

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Mindscape Bitmasters



MUCH LIKE ITS console equivalents (it was also released on the NES, SNES and Genesis), Championship Pool is endorsed by the Billiard Congress of America, and you know they don’t mess around. As well as the ability to take on 8-ball and 9-ball tournaments, players can also choose from a number of other rulesets for one-off challenges, such as Equal Offense, Three Ball and Speed Pool. There’s also a Party mode where up to five players can take turns playing any of the 11 variations on offer. Naturally, a game with coloured balls loses something on a monochrome screen: the game instead tells you which number each ball is when you pass the cursor over it. ■

FACT

The game’s box wrongly states that Party mode is for up to eight

players, so I hope your eight-person birthday party wasn't hinging on it.

CHASE HQ

Year Publisher Developer 1990 Taito / Bandai Bits Studios

A POPULAR ARCADE game in the late '80s, Chase HQ is what you'd get if you mix Out Run with videos of police chases. Each of the game's five stages has you chasing down a particular crook: a car thief in a small German sports car, a jewel thief in a modern German sports car, an 'industrial spy' in an Italian sports car, a 'foreign terrorist' in a small Italian two-seater and a 'wanted criminal' (so what were the others then?) in another German sports car. You have to reach the car before the timer runs out, and are then given another timer to run them off the road by slamming your car into them until they pull over. ■

FACT

The game doesn't mess around: when you clear a stage it says: 'Well

done, you have rid the streets of more vermin.'

THE CHESSMASTER

Year Publisher Developer

1991 Hi Tech Expressions / Nintendo Park Place Productions

CHESSMASTER IS THE best-selling chess video game series in history, and the Game Boy version was one of the most popular versions given the appeal of being able to take chess on the move. The game has 16 different difficulty levels, ranging from Newcomer 1 (which is almost someone who's never seen a chess board in their life) all the way up to Infinite mode, where the Chessmaster will think about its best move for an infinite amount of time until you manually force it to continue. One thing the Game Boy version boasts that not even its NES or SNES counterparts offered is speech: while it's basic and only consists of a couple of phrases like 'welcome to Chessmaster', 'capture' and 'check', it was still impressive.

FACT

There were nearly 20 Chessmaster sequels released over the years. At the time of writing, the last was Chessmaster Live on the Xbox 360,

released in 2008.

CHOPLIFTER II

Year Publisher Developer 1991 JVC Musical Industries
Beam Software

THE ORIGINAL CHOPLIFTER was a home computer game which was eventually ported to a number of consoles and arcades. The sequel was exclusive to the Game Boy and is more of the same: playing as a helicopter pilot, you have to rescue series of hostages by flying through enemyinfested stages, gunning down hostile air and ground forces and clearing the area enough that it's safe to not only land, but also sit and wait while the hostages run into the chopper. Then you have to take off again and return them to your base, all while making sure you aren't either shot down by enemies, or simply clumsy enough to bump into a building (or even birds) enough times to take your helicopter down with everyone on board.

FACT

The original Choplifter was developed out of boredom, when AI researcher Dan Gorlin decided to kill time in the evenings by working

on an Apple II he borrowed from his grandfather.

CHOPLIFTER III

Year Publisher Developer 1994 Ocean Teeny Weeny Games

AFTER CHOPLIFTER II was released, an enhanced port was released on the Sega Game Gear and given the name Choplifter III. Oddly, this version was then ported back to the Game Boy as Choplifter III too, giving the impression that it was an entirely different sequel to the second game. In reality then, Choplifter III on the Game Boy is a visually enhanced re-do of its predecessor, with similar level designs (though the stages are played in a different order). If you're an American reader who already has Choplifter II, then, and you're wondering what you missed out on when the third game came to Europe, the honest answer is 'not a lot', save for improved visuals.

FACT

It was revealed in 1997 that series creator Dan Gorlin was working on a 3D Choplifter game for PC, but it was scrapped. There was an HD polygonal remake in 2012 for PS3 and Xbox 360, though.

CHUCK ROCK

Year 1993
Publisher Sony Imagesoft
Developer Spidersoft

WHEN LARA CROFT was still a twinkle in Core Design's collective eyes, the studio's mascot was instead Chuck Rock, a caveman with the ability to lift and toss boulders with ease. While the first game was designed for 16-bit consoles and computers first and foremost, Lincoln-based studio Spidersoft was put in charge of creating a port for the Game Boy. Despite the clear graphical differences, the handheld version actually does a fairly good job of maintaining the feel of its more advanced siblings, with Chuck's full range of moves available to him, from his jumping kick to his trademark rock-lifting. It's not an exact port, though: it's a shorter game and some setpieces with larger dinosaur sprites are missing.

FACT

Take-Two acquired Spidersoft in 1998 and renamed it Tarantula Studios, where it continued working on Game Boy titles. Eventually its development arm shut down and it became a QA team, Rockstar Lincoln.

CLIFFHANGER

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Sony Imagesoft Spidersoft

BASED ON THE Sylvester Stallone action movie of the same name, the Game Boy version of Cliffhanger is a pretty faithful port of the NES version, with the most notable difference being that the action is zoomed in a bit more due to the handheld's lower screen resolution. Playing as Stallone's character Gabe Walker, you have to make your way through six stages of treacherous snowy mountain terrain as you hunt down Eric Qualen, a former military intelligence operative turned insane international terrorist-thieftype moron. Along the way you'll have to fight terrorists, fend off aggressive wildlife, stop regularly at fires to keep warm and pull off death-defying jumps over enormous chasms in a way only a basic 8-bit recreation of Sylvester Stallone can. ■

FACT

The film has a Guinness World Record for the most expensive aerial stunt ever performed. A stuntman was paid $1 million to jump between two planes at 15,000 feet without safety devices.

COLLEGE SLAM

Year 1996
Publisher Acclaim
Developer Iguana Entertainment

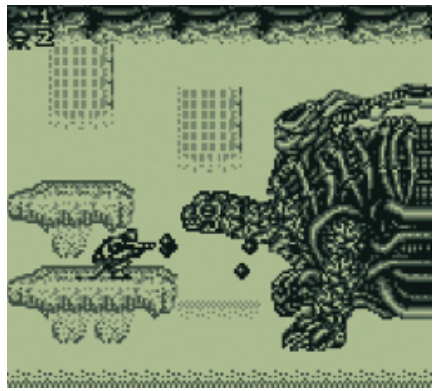
COLLEGE SLAM WAS a spin-off of the immensely popular NBA Jam, with the main difference being that, as the title implies, all the NBA teams have been replaced with college basketball teams instead. There are 44 teams to choose from in the Game Boy version, covering most of the main Division I colleges (but not all of them; sorry, Notre Dame fans). Gameplay is similar to that of the main NBA Jam games, offering a more arcade-like take on basketball with fewer rules and over-the-top dunks. The Game Boy version is a little more awkward to play than the console versions because the turbo button is the Start button, meaning you have to hold down the D-Pad, Start and B to perform a dunk. ■

FACT

US magazine *Computer Gaming World* called College Slam the 11th worst computer game ever made, which is either a massive overreaction or a damning indictment of the PC port.

CONTRA: THE ALIEN WARS

Year Publisher Developer 1994 Konami Factor 5



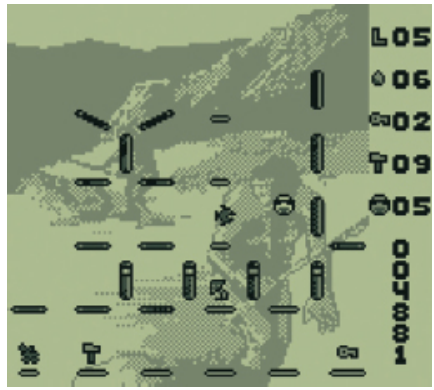
CONSIDERED ONE OF the most impressive Game Boy ports, this is a handheld ‘demaster’ of 1992 SNES title Contra III. Despite the obvious differences between both systems, the Game Boy version offers surprisingly faithful run-and-gun gameplay as players try to take down the evil alien military organisation Red Falcon. While many of the elements that made the SNES title so well-loved are present and accounted for here (including both side-scrolling and top-down stages), some elements did still have to be cut out, including certain mini-bosses, the laser weapon and even a couple of stages. Still, what remains is a remarkable technical achievement, given the numerous set-pieces employed by the SNES version. ■

FACT

The European version is called Probotector 2 and replaces the human soldiers with robots (following series tradition). This would be the last ever Contra game to do this, though.

COOL BALL

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Takara / Infogrames Bit Managers



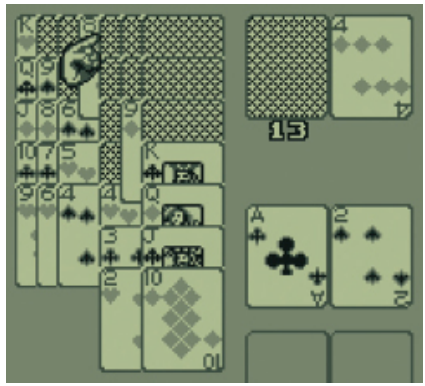
THIS PUZZLE GAME tells the story of the titular Cool Ball and his similarly spherical girlfriend Suzzette. Initially set during 'the predawn of the universe', when the Big Bang happens Suzzette is sent off flying through time, so it's up to Cool Ball to chase after her. Each of the game's 100 stages sees Cool Ball continually bouncing up and down as the player tries to guide him around, collecting every item on the stage to make the exit appear. Some of these items can be used in certain situations: collecting a key, for example, will let Cool Ball break through certain walls, while collecting the water drop lets him land on fire. Some platforms also give way when he lands on them, so planning ahead is essential. ■

FACT

The Game Boy version of Cool Ball is known in Europe as Pop Up, which is also the name it goes by on home computers.

COOL HAND

Year Publisher Developer 1998 Take-Two Interactive Tarantula Studios



THIS EUROPE-ONLY CARD game compilation contains digital recreations of three popular card games: Blackjack, Cribbage and Solitaire. Each of the three games has a variety of options: Blackjack, for example, lets you play using Las Vegas Strip, Downtown Vegas, London or Atlantic City rules, while Solitaire lets you lay out the cards in different styles, from the more conventional Klondike to the likes of 'Monte Carlo' or 'Calculation'. Each game also has instructions to help beginners. It's not to be confused with Las Vegas Cool Hand, which is the Game Boy Color version of the same game and has one notable improvement: you can probably guess what it is, but you can find out later in the book. ■

FACT

In case you're curious, Downtown Vegas Blackjack is played with two decks, while Las Vegas Strip rules use two decks and the dealer must stand on a 'soft 17' (which is a 17 including an Ace).

COOL SPOT

Year 1994
Publisher Virgin Interactive
Developer NMS Software

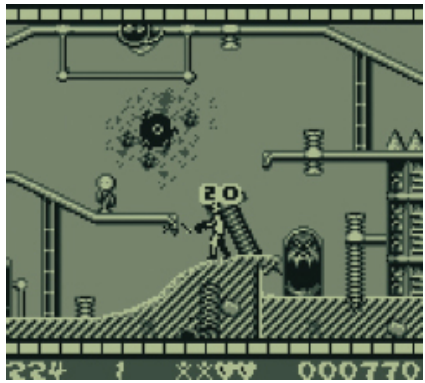
SPARE A THOUGHT for 7 Up drink mascot Cool Spot. His fellow Spots have been kidnapped by ‘powers uncool’ and locked in cages, so Cool Spot has to rescue them. This port of Virgin Games’ Mega Drive and SNES platformer retains the majority of the content, though only eight of the 11 console versions’ stages are intact. Players have to collect a certain number of small spots (called Cool Points) in order to give Cool Spot the ability to fire ‘Cool Shots’. These can break the cages holding his friends hostage. As in the console versions, the European version of the game was modified to remove all 7 Up references (possibly to avoid confusion with 7 Up’s European mascot, Fido Dido). ■

FACT

It’s impossible to get a perfect 100% collection rate in every stage in the Game Boy version, because a bug means one spot can’t be collected in the Radical Rails stage.

COOL WORLD

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Ocean Ocean



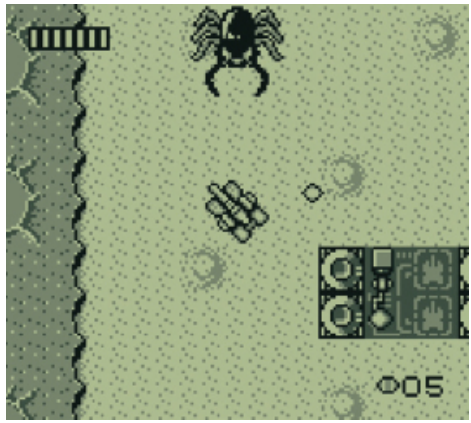
PARAMOUNT'S ODD PART live-action, part animated movie starring Brad Pitt and Kim Basinger may have been a box office flop, but it still resulted in numerous video games. The Game Boy version is a port of the home computer game released on the likes of the PC and Amiga, and is a platformer in which players take control of cartoonist Jack Deebs, as he travels between the Real World and the animated Cool World, using his trusty pen to remove all the objects that are in the wrong world. Cartoon enemies called Doodles are trying to stop Jack so they can enter the Real World: he has to stop them by firing ink at them until they turn into big blotches, then sucking them up with his pen. ■

FACT

Although the film was a bomb, its soundtrack was critically acclaimed, featuring music from The Cult, Moby and Thompson Twins, along with a new track by David Bowie.

COSMO TANK

Year 1990
Publisher Atlus
Developer Asuka Technologies



WHEN EARTH'S RESOURCES are depleted, colonies are set up on new planets Desa, Gadam, Monoa, Aquel and DN-1. All is well until giant alien monster insects decide they want to take over: it's up to you, in your fancy new Tiger a-1 fighter, to travel to each of the five planets and rid them of creepy-crawly scum. Cosmo Tank is made up of two gameplay styles: as you explore each planet the view is from a top-down perspective, but when you enter a cave your a-1 transforms from a spaceship to a hovercraft and you get to explore the cave's tunnels as a first-person maze (similar to a dungeon crawler game). There's also a two-player mode where players race to kill the boss first. ■

FACT

There's a secret sixth planet, Gidoro, which only appears if you destroy the Life Cores on the other five planets.

CRYSTAL QUEST

Year 1991
Publisher Data East
Developer NovaLogic

WHEN UK PROGRAMMER Patrick Buckland made a 1985 shareware game called Crystal Raider, publisher Michael Greene asked him to get in touch if he ever needed help publishing a sequel. That sequel was Crystal Quest, which – as the first colour game on the Mac II – was a big hit. This Game Boy port obviously ditches the colour but the concept remains: play through 99 stages, collecting all the crystals in each (which opens up the exit doors). Momentum plays a role in this game, but not just in terms of player movement. Your bullets are also affected by it, meaning the faster you're travelling when you shoot, the faster the bullets move. This creates a risk-reward system where you have to speed towards enemies for more effective shots. ■

FACT

Beating a level plays a sound effect of a woman moaning 'oooh', which was considered uncomfortable for some Mac users and downright offensive for others. It's still in the Game Boy version.

CUTTHROAT ISLAND

Year 1996
Publisher Acclaim
Developer Software Creations

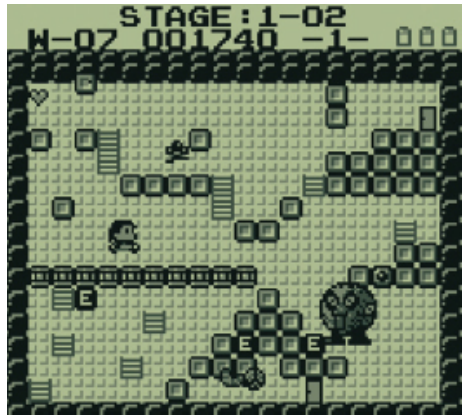
COOL WORLD MUST be positively delighted that it's sharing a page with Cutthroat Island, a disaster of a film whose $10m gross from a $100m budget eclipses Cool World's $14 million gross / $28 million budget. Set in the year 1688, you play as Morgan Adams, a swordbrandishing pirate who's trying to be the first to reach the uncharted Cutthroat Island so she can claim the treasure that's said to be located there. While the 16-bit versions of the game were beat 'em ups with movement in eight directions, the Game Boy version is a strictly side-scrolling affair which consists almost entirely of one-on-one duels, with the occasional platforming section thrown in there to mix things up a bit. ■

FACT

The film was in trouble long before it hit cinemas. Director Renny Harlin fired the chief camera operator following an argument, after which more than 20 other crew members quit.

CYRAID

Year 1991
Publisher Nexoft
Developer Epoch / Sakata



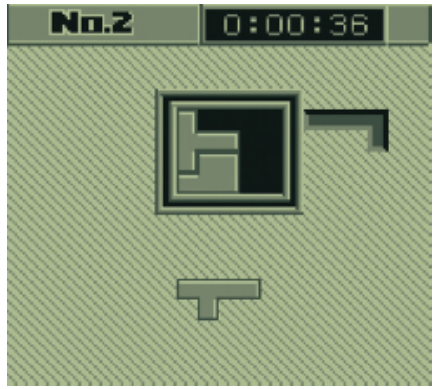
SAS IN THE YEAR 3090, the evil Professor Rogue builds a fortress called Cyraid, inside which he starts building an army of robots who will help him take over Earth. Getting wind of this, the 'Federation' calls on their two best Agents of Peace, who go by the codenames Warrior and Fighter, to head to Cyraid and boot some robot bottom. What's more, Rogue has learned that Warrior and Fighter are brothers, and kidnapped their mother to make things more interesting. In each of the game's 70-odd stages, you have to break open the energy blocks and gather the energy contained in them. At first you can only kick things (including ladders, handily) but over time you power up and can eventually break blocks, jump and fire a gun. ■

FACT

The credits show the cast of (four) characters, including Rogue, who points out: 'I am still alive.'

DAEDALIAN OPUS

Year 1990
Publisher Vic Tokai
Developer Vic Tokai



THE WORLD OF Daedalus contains a series of islands on which 36 tangram puzzles can be found. If you aren't familiar with the term, tangram puzzles are those tricky ones where you're presented with an empty frame and a bunch of smaller blocks, and the aim is to fit all the blocks into the frame without any overlapping. At first you're given fairly basic puzzles with three or four blocks each time, but by the time you reach the 36th stage you're looking at a massive 8x8 frame and 13 separate pieces. Naturally, a lot of trial and error is the order of the day in this game, especially given that pieces can not only be rotated but also flipped, adding even more to the complexity. ■

FACT

The title refers to the mythical Greek character Daedalus, who created a labyrinth to hold the Minotaur. It's not clear why, because there are no mazes or Minotaurs in this game.

DAFFY DUCK

Year Publisher Developer 1995 Sunsoft Sunsoft

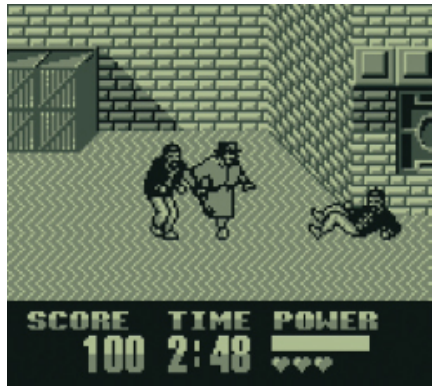
GOING BY HIS sci-fi alias Duck Dodgers, Daffy Duck has travelled into space to stop Marvin the Martian from destroying Earth (it blocks his view of Venus, you see). Daffy is armed with a jetpack and a 'ray gun' which is apparently subject to gravity because its shots fire more like balls, which drop over a distance. If such firepower sounds weak, Daffy can also dispose of his enemies with the trusty platforming trick of jumping on their heads (indeed, it's needed to beat the bosses). Despite the title screen – and therefore the internet – deciding that this game is called Daffy Duck: The Marvin Missions (implying a link with the SNES game of the same name), the subtitle is nowhere to be found on the packaging in any region. ■

FACT

If you stand on the mine cart near the start of the first stage, boost up and stay airborne as you blast forwards, you'll find a hidden set of obscenely difficult 'Super Stages'.

DARKMAN

Year 1992 *Publisher* Ocean *Developer* Ocean



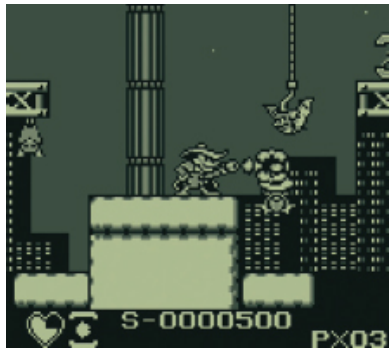
SOMETHING OF A hidden gem, Darkman is based on the 1990 Sam Raimi film of the same name but is nothing like the action platformer released on the NES or the home computer versions. Instead, the Game Boy is a Double Dragon knock-off in which the protagonist – a scientist called Peyton Westlake who's left horribly disfigured but unable to feel pain after being attacked by a mob – heads out to take on the city's criminals and, eventually, rescue his girlfriend. When I say it's like Double Dragon, I mean it, right down to the fact that the B and A buttons perform attacks to the left and right respectively, instead of simply attacking in the direction Darkman is facing. ■

FACT

Darkman star Liam Neeson found out about the role when his friend Bill Paxton told him he'd auditioned for it. When Neeson auditioned too and got the job, Paxton didn't speak to him for months.

DARKWING DUCK

Year 1993
Publisher Capcom
Developer Make Software



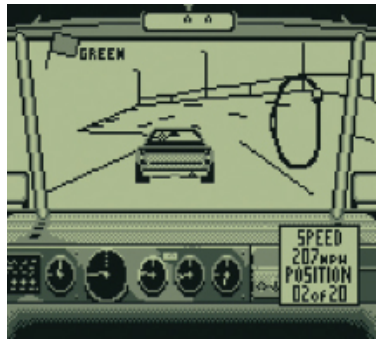
DISNEY'S SATURDAY MORNING cartoon about a crime-fighting superhero duck was popular enough to lead to an NES action platformer which was then ported to the Game Boy. Like its console big brother, the handheld version of Darkwing Duck plays like a modified version of a Mega Man game, with more freedom than those games in some areas (you have a shield move and can duck), and less in others (you can't run while shooting). Although it's a near-perfect port of the NES version, the reduced resolution of the Game Boy means the screen area is smaller. This has an effect on some boss battles, actually making them easier than they are on the NES (because some hazards have been removed). ■

FACT

The tighter zoom also means Darkwing Duck's jumps aren't quite as high. This makes the game harder in some platforming sections, where long jumps suddenly need to be pixel perfect.

DAYS OF THUNDER

Year	1992
Publisher	Mindscape
Developer	Argonaut Games



BEFORE IT CO-DEVELOPED the Super FX chip and developed Star Fox for the SNES, British developer Argonaut was already dabbling with '3D' games on the Game Boy. Days of Thunder (based on the Tom Cruise movie of the same name) was an early example of this, giving players a first-person perspective as they take on a series of stock car races. Playing as rookie driver Cole Trickle, you can take on either a single race or a full season. There are five tracks to choose from – Daytona, Phoenix, Atlanta, Michigan and Miami – but as anyone familiar with the sport will know, they're all just variations on ovals. This perhaps suits the game, because portraying even such simple track designs leads to a very low frame rate. ■

FACT

Programmer Steven Dunn didn't lose the racing game bug. He went on to be a programming lead on the Need for Speed: Shift games, then technical director of all three Project Cars games.

DEAD HEAT SCRAMBLE

Year	1990
Publisher	Electro Brain
Developer	Copya Systems

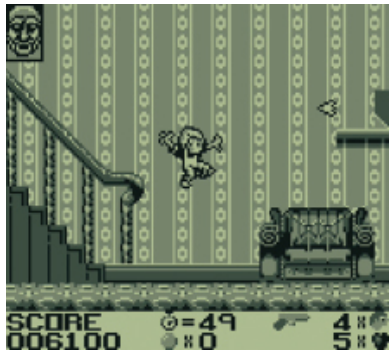
THIS UNIQUE RACING game puts players inside a giant half-pipe and tasks them with reaching the end of a series of races before a timer runs out. There are three cars to choose between – a dune buggy, a sand rail and an off-road truck – though they don't appear to handle differently. There are 10 tracks to race through, and each is populated by other cars and littered with obstacles. In true arcade racer style, a couple of crashes is enough to stop you reaching the finish line in time, but you're armed with a jump move which lets you leap over hazards. There are also occasional power-ups, which speed you up, let you destroy obstacles or freeze the timer. ■

FACT

Oddly, the manual suggests that the best way to prepare for the game is to 'grab a deep seat and a far away look'.

DENNIS THE MENACE

Year 1994
Publisher Ocean
Developer Ocean



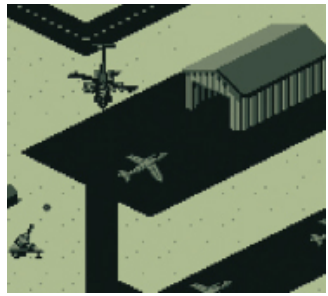
BASED ON THE American comic strip – specifically, its 1993 John Hughes movie adaptation – rather than the UK *Beano* character, Dennis the Menace (or just Dennis in Europe, to avoid confusion) sees the titular troublemaker trying to make amends with his elderly neighbour Mr Wilson by trying to retrieve his rare coin collection, which has been stolen by a burglar called Switchblade Sam. The game takes Dennis through six levels – Mr Wilson's house, a forest, the sewers, an adventure park, the school and the boiler room – and in each stage Dennis has to collect a certain number of coins marked X in order to advance to the next level. Enemies are dealt with using Dennis's water pistol, peashooter and slingshot. ■

FACT

Mason Gamble, the 7-year-old who plays Dennis in the movie, was cast after he pulled a live worm out of his pocket during his audition. It's not known if this was also how *The Godfather*'s cast was chosen.

DESERT STRIKE: RETURN TO THE GULF

Year 1995
Publisher Malibu Games / Ocean
Developer Ocean



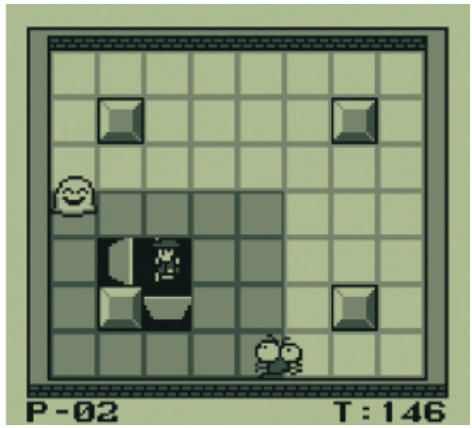
THIS IS A surprisingly authentic recreation of EA's 16-bit Gulf War inspired helicopter game. When the maniacal General Kilbaba (who's not supposed to be Saddam Hussein, honest) threatens to start Armageddon, the US President chooses you to take on a series of high-risk pre-emptive campaigns to prevent the worst from happening. Like its console-based siblings, the Game Boy version of Desert Strike retains the game's isometric perspective as players fly around open environments, using their map to track the next objective and using their winch to pick up stranded allies and resources like ammo, armour and fuel. Despite the obvious graphical downgrade, the game is a faithful rendition, though the Game Boy's screen does blur things a little while flying at speed. ■

FACT

If you enter the password BQQBZH, the game will call you a 'little old lady' and give you 10 lives instead of the usual three.

DEXTERITY

Year Publisher Developer 1990 SNK SNK



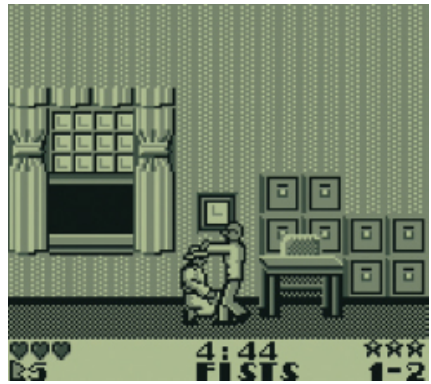
DEXTERITY IS A sort of action game take on Reversi / Othello, with the addition of enemies and other obstacles. You play as Dexter Doolittle, a young lad who's so imaginative he conjures up magical puzzle rooms in his mind. There are 30 of these rooms, each made up of 8x7 grids of squares. The aim is to flip over all the squares to colour them in, but the enemies on each stage can flip them over too, meaning if you don't deal with them all your hard work can be undone. The game follows Reversi rules in that if there are a few white squares in between two black ones, they'll all fill in at once: if an enemy is in the way while the squares are flipping it'll kill them.

FACT

The game is known as Funny Field in Japan, though I should stress that daydreaming about killing creatures (even with flippy squares) is no laughing matter.

DICK TRACY

Year 1991
Publisher Bandai
Developer Realtime Associates



WHEN BIG BOY Caprice escapes from prison and kicks off a new crime wave unlike anything his city has ever seen before, it's up to legendary police detective Dick Tracy (armed with a pistol, tommy gun, grenades and tear gas) to down Big Boy and his other criminal pals: the Brow, Pruneface, Flattop, the usual suspects. Whereas the NES Dick Tracy game alternates between top-down and side-scrolling sections, the Game Boy title is a straight 2D platformer in which Tracy makes his way through five different locations. Each of these contains 12 hidden pieces of a torn-up photo, and after defeating each boss Tracy has to put them together to reveal incriminating evidence. If you miss even one of these pieces, you have to start the level again. ■

FACT

It's never explicitly said which city the Dick Tracy universe is based in, but a deed seen in the live-action movie refers to it as Homeville.

DIG DUG

Year 1992
Publisher Namco Now
Developer Production

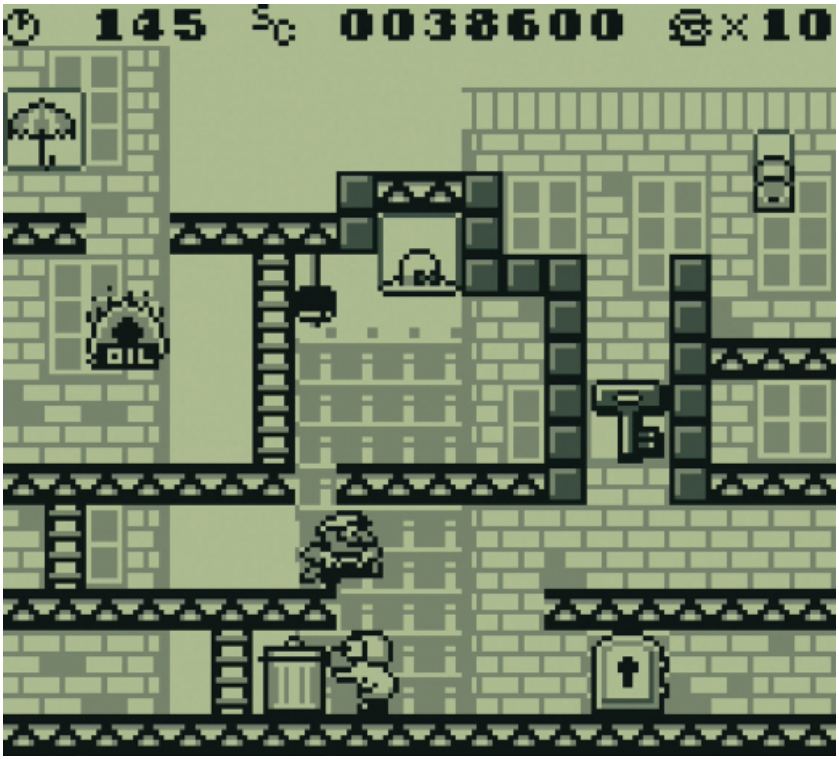
NAMCO'S CLASSIC 1982 arcade game sees its hero Taizo Hori trying to clear a series of dirt-filled stages by inflating enemies until they explode. The Game Boy version contains a straight port of the arcade game (albeit with vertically scrolling stages to handle the arcade version's aspect ratio), but it also has an extra mode called New Dig Dug. In this new 41-stage game, players have to collect three keys to unlock the door to the next level, while making use of new items like bombs and rolling boulders. There are also new enemy types, and since the aim is no longer to kill all the enemies on each stage this means they can now respawn while you're looking for keys. ■

FACT

The Dig Dug theme, the fun little tune that plays when Taizo walks, was only created because sound designer Yuriko Keino couldn't come up with a good walking sound effect.

DONKEY KONG

Year Publisher Developer 1994 Nintendo Pax Softnica



AT FIRST GLANCE, Donkey Kong seems to be a straightforward recreation of Nintendo's iconic 1981 arcade game, containing all four of the levels that were originally found in the coin-op. This all changes, however, when the fourth of these stages is completed. Though it ends with Donkey Kong falling to his doom like he usually does, this time he gets up, dusts himself off, kidnaps Mario's girlfriend Pauline again and runs off to the city. What follows is one of the greatest twists in video game history, as what appeared to be a port of a four-stage arcade game becomes a sprawling 101-stage platformer filled to the brim with interesting enemies and gameplay mechanics. It soon becomes clear that Mario can now somersault, perform handstands, pick items up and generally do a lot more than he could back in '81, and the themed worlds make the most of these new abilities. Generally, the aim in each stage is to find a key and take it to a locked door to access the next level, and over time this lends a puzzle-like element to proceedings, with players sometimes having to stop and figure out exactly how to get the key to the exit. Donkey Kong would ultimately become the first game in the Mario

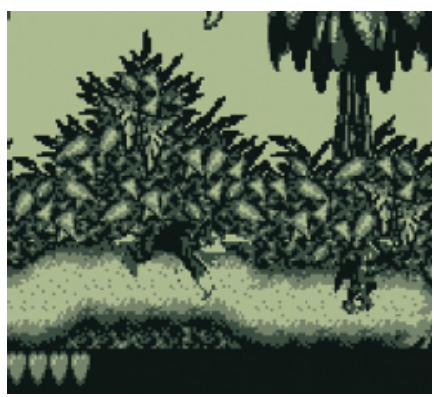
vs Donkey Kong series, and Mario's new somersault would become a key move in his future jump to 3D. This book is supposed to be impartial, but forgive this author for pointing out that Donkey Kong is my favourite Game Boy game. ■

FACT

Donkey Kong was the first game designed to make use of the Super Game Boy. It improves the graphics and change's Pauline's squeals from a bleep to an audible 'help'.

DONKEY KONG LAND

Year Publisher Developer 1995 Nintendo Rare



IN 1994, RARE stunned players with Donkey Kong Country, a SNES game which used pre-rendered CG sprites to create a 2D platformer with a 3D look. Donkey Kong Land attempted to pull off the same trick on the Game Boy, and while it obviously isn't quite as visually impressive as its 16-bit bigger brother it's still a remarkable feat. Rather than a straight port, this is a completely separate platformer with its own stages and its own (rather meta) plot: after Cranky Kong tells Donkey and Diddy that the only reason the SNES game did well was because of the graphics, the pair deliberately let villain

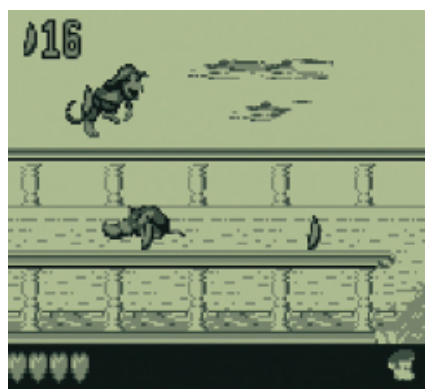
King K Rool steal their bananas for the second time so they can prove it's still fun on an 8-bit handheld. ■

FACT

A preview in *Nintendo Power* magazine showed some characters who were later scrapped, including an animal helper called Ram Bunkshus and a Kong wearing a fedora hat.

DONKEY KONG LAND 2

Year Publisher Developer 1996 Nintendo Rare



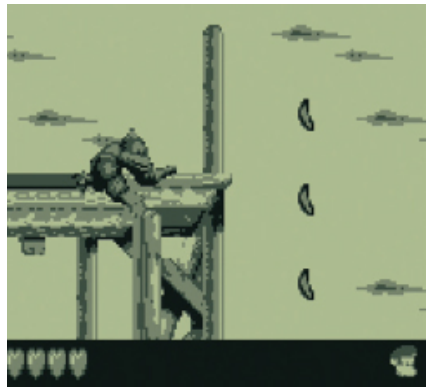
AS YOU MAY expect, Donkey Kong Land 2 is a Game Boy take on Donkey Kong Country 2: Diddy's Kong Quest, replacing Donkey Kong with Diddy's girlfriend Dixie Kong. While the game once again features new level designs, it sticks a lot closer to its 16-bit counterpart this time, with a plot that's far less fourth-wall-breaking. Instead, although it's technically a sequel to Donkey Kong Country 2 (and not a straight port, as some believe) it's just a revamp of the same story: after Donkey Kong is rescued in the SNES game he's re-kidnapped right away, meaning Diddy and Dixie have to save him all over again. While the first Game Boy game could only handle two animal friends, here there's a healthy six to recruit.

FACT

Somewhat confusingly, this second game is simply called Donkey Kong Land in Japan. The first game was instead named Super Donkey Kong GB.

DONKEY KONG LAND III

Year Publisher Developer 1997 Nintendo Rare



THE FINAL DONKEY Kong Land game again takes cues from its SNES equivalent, and once again messes with the story to offer a sequel rather than a port. Whereas the 16-bit game had Dixie and Kiddy Kong rescuing Donkey and Diddy in the Northern Kremisphere, this time the pair are returning to the region to try and find a mysterious Lost World before Donkey and Diddy can manage it. It's a convenient excuse to revisit some of the areas from the SNES game, albeit with different level designs ensuring that, like its predecessors, it really is its own standalone adventure. Given the bananacollecting nature of the games, all three Donkey Kong Land titles were released on yellow cartridges.

FACT

Japan didn't get this game: instead it got a Game Boy Color version in 2000 which obviously looks more colourful but is missing some of the Game Boy version's animation frames.

DOUBLE DRAGON

Year Publisher Developer 1990 Tradewest / Nintendo Technos Japan

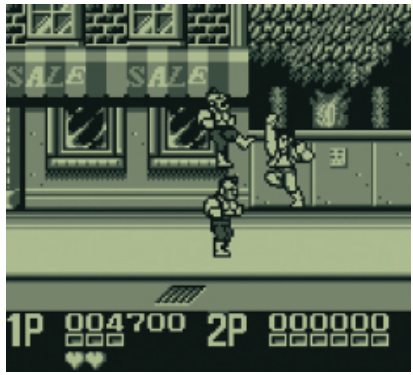
IN THE DAYS before Final Fight and Streets of Rage, arcade title Double Dragon was the first properly successful beat 'em up game. It was ported to the NES in 1988 and this Game Boy rendition is based on that, though it has a few tweaks that arguably makes it a better overall package. Whereas in the NES game players had to earn points to unlock new moves later in the game, here all the moves are available from the start, meaning protagonist Billy can boot some serious rump right away. Some of the levels have been modified to allow for the Game Boy's smaller screen, but in some instances they've also been expanded with new rooms, giving the handheld some original content. ■

FACT

One thing missing in the Game Boy version is the NES game's twist ending in which it turns out Billy's brother Jimmy is the final boss. This wasn't in the arcade original, either.

DOUBLE DRAGON II

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Acclaim Technos Japan



WHEREAS THE FIRST Game Boy Double Dragon was clearly based on the NES version, the second is nothing like it. That's because it's instead based on one of the games from Technos' Japanese beat 'em up series Nekketsu Kouha Kunio-kun (known in the west as River City). Because the Kunio-kun games specialise in chunky big cartoonish fighters, the game's sprites and backgrounds were completely redrawn for the west, and with a new soundtrack added too the conversion to Double Dragon II was complete. Because it's from a different series, the combat is simpler here than it is in the first Double Dragon, though it does add a Link Cable co-op mode, which the first game didn't offer. ■

FACT

The game was originally going to be localised as Renegade II (the first was also a westernised Kunio-kun). Though it became Double Dragon II instead, Billy has a Renegade-like mullet in cutscenes.

DOUBLE DRAGON 3: THE ARCADE GAME

Year 1991
Publisher Acclaim
Developer The Sales Curve

WHILE THE NES version of Double Dragon 3 was a completely different title, the Game Boy version is instead a straight port of the arcade game, Double Dragon 3: The Rosetta Stone. This is a relatively authentic recreation (within reason) in which brothers Billy and Jimmy Lee travel across the world in search of three Rosetta Stones, culminating in a trek through Egypt and two final battles against a mummy and Cleopatra. The game was generally criticised for its awkward combat and 'cheap' enemies, leading to an extremely difficult game. As such, some felt that the Game Boy could have benefited from a (more manageable) port of the separate NES game, instead of using the more advanced arcade game as its source material. ■

FACT

In an early example of microtransactions, the arcade version had an in-game shop where players could buy powerups by inserting more coins.

DOUBLE DRIBBLE: 5 ON 5

Year Publisher Developer 1991 Konami Konami

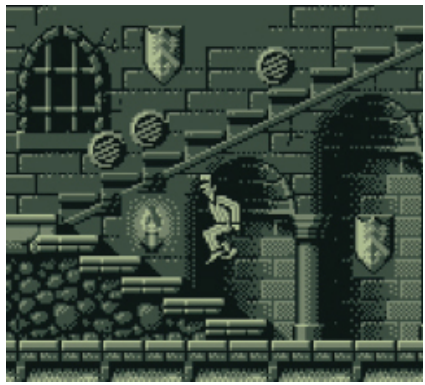
KONAMI'S BASKETBALL GAME was a huge success in the arcades in 1986 and the NES in 1987, so a Game Boy port followed in 1991. Despite the years between releases, the Game Boy version of Double Dribble is still fairly barebones when it comes to game modes, offering just exhibition matches against either the CPU or another player (with the Link Cable). There are eight unlicensed teams to choose from – the Boston Frogs, New York Empires, Atlanta Eagles, Detroit Wheels, Chicago Bisons, Dallas Mustangs, Portland Scouts and LA Waves – and gameplay is similar to the console version, right down to the way the game switches to a dramatic full-screen cutscene every time you dunk the ball. ■

FACT

If you're the type who enjoys awful puns, the manual says the Dallas Mustangs 'don't horse around' when it comes to passing, and that the Boston Frogs are 'a little green on defence'.

DR FRANKEN

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Kemco / Elite Systems
MotiveTime



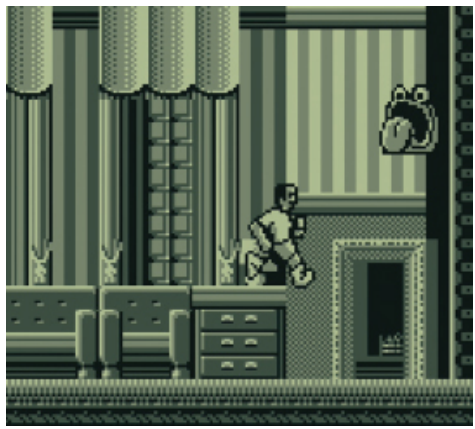
WHEN DR FRANKENBONE passes away, he leaves behind two of his finest creations, a monster called Franky and Franky's monster girlfriend Bitsy. One night, Bitsy is kidnapped by the spirits of the doc's failed inventions, split into pieces and scattered around the castle grounds. It's up to Franky – who's been shrunk down to three feet tall, incidentally – to explore the castle and gather all of Bitsy's bits so you can bring her to the lab and rebuild her. Dr Franken is a Metroidvania style game made up of 230 separate rooms to explore, some of which are dark and need to be lit with Franky's lantern (as long as it has fuel). Thankfully there's a map to help players keep track of where they are. ■

FACT

The music that plays throughout the game is Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata, which has been used in numerous other games including Earthworm Jim 2 and Resident Evil.

DR FRANKEN II

Year Publisher Developer 1997 Jaleco MotiveTime



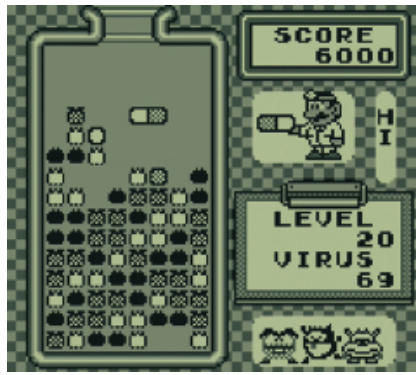
IT'S BEEN MANY years since the events of the first game and Franky and Bitsy are happily reunited, but the absence of Dr Frankenbone means the castle is starting to fall apart. Even worse, Franky's been hit with a massive electricity bill. When Dr Franken II opens, the local townsfolk have locked Franky in the doc's hidden chateau, so it's up to Franky to find a way to escape then travel across the world to find the doc's lost treasure – a golden portrait of Bitsy – so he can sell it and pay off his debts. Dr Franken II plays faster than its predecessor and is arguably less frustrating due to less cramped level design. This was to be the last Dr Franken game, however. ■

FACT

The game has a bad ending. If you unlock the front door of the chateau and approach the angry mob without the portrait of Bitsy in your inventory, Franky gets arrested.

DR MARIO

Year Publisher Developer 1990 Nintendo Nintendo



RELEASED ON BOTH the Game Boy and NES at the same time, Dr Mario is practically the same game on both systems, with the only difference being that the Game Boy version has slightly smaller sprites to help fit the entire playing area on its screen without having to make concessions. The aim is the same in both versions: you have to help Dr Mario kill all the viruses in his jar by dropping coloured pills onto them. If four segments of the same colour – be they pill or virus – touch, they'll disappear. Naturally, the Game Boy's lack of colour display could have proved problematic, but given that there are only three colours in the NES game it's easily remedied with black, white and grey pills. ■

FACT

The 'R' in 'Dr' on the cover has a line through it, as if it says 'Rx'. That's the symbol for a medical prescription, and is an abbreviation of the Latin 'recipere', which means 'take thou'.

DRAGON'S LAIR: THE LEGEND

Year Publisher Developer 1991 Ubisoft / Elite Systems MotiveTime

SINCE THE DRAGON'S Lair arcade game was an interactive cartoon which ran actual video off a Laserdisc, the Game Boy obviously had no chance of replicating this. Instead, Elite took one of its old games – the 1985 ZX Spectrum platformer Roller Coaster – and reworked it into a Dragon's Lair game. The story here goes that the heroic Dirk the Daring has to collect all 194 pieces of a Life Stone so he can awaken the 'Dormant Knight' and team up with them to defeat the evil Mordroc and rescue Princess Daphne. Once you realise it was originally a game about exploring a theme park in search of money scattered by a disgruntled employee, the numerous mine cart sections start to make sense. ■

FACT

Oddly, the game ends at the point when you awaken the Dormant Knight, meaning you don't actually get to fight Mordroc and rescue Daphne.

DRAGONHEART

Year Publisher Developer 1996 Acclaim Torus Games

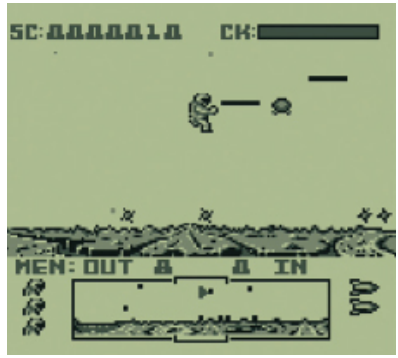
DRAGONHEART WAS A 1996 movie starring Dennis Quaid as a dragon-slaying knight called Sir Bowen, and Sean Connery as the voice of Draco, the last ever dragon. The Game Boy tie-in, seemingly serving as a prequel of sorts, picks up where there are still four or five dragons left. It's up to the player, as Sir Bowen, to kill these remaining dragons, meet and befriend Draco then defeat the evil King Einon and end his reign of terror. The game mostly consists of first-person maze exploration as you find and speak to various villagers to progress the plot. Each stage then ends with a battle (usually against a dragon but later against humans) where the action switches to a side-on, one-onone fighting game. ■

FACT

In the film, Draco is an entirely CGI character created by ILM, who got the job by showing Universal a test dragon, which was a stretched-out version of the T-Rex it made for *Jurassic Park*.

DROPZONE

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Mindscape Eurocom



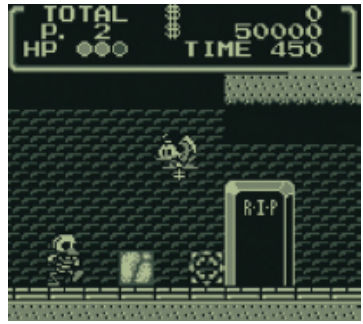
ORIGINALLY CREATED IN 1984 by famed UK developer Archer Maclean, Dropzone was a home computer ‘homage’ to the arcade game Defender in that players have to fly through a looping stage, shooting aliens and preventing them from abducting scientists. The main difference between the two is that while Defender has the player controlling a small spaceship, here it’s an astronaut in a jetpack, patrolling the surface of Jupiter’s moon Io. Because of its inspiration, Dropzone feels like an arcade game even though it never actually was one, meaning its gameplay is fast, simplistic and repetitive. The Game Boy port is pretty authentic, with the obvious main difference being the lack of colour. This was later remedied with a Game Boy Color port. ■

FACT

Dropzone was also ported to the NES, SNES, GBA and PlayStation. If you’re an American reader keen to play it, the GBA version was the only one released in North America.

DUCKTALES

Year 1990 *Publisher* Capcom *Developer* Capcom



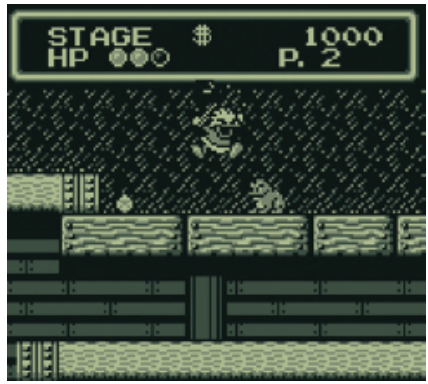
CAPCOM'S 1989 NES PLATFORMER interpretation of Disney's Saturday morning TV show was so well-received that the publisher released a Game Boy port the following year. For the most part it plays like the NES game, meaning it follows Scrooge McDuck as he travels around Africa, the Amazon, the Himalayas, Transylvania and the Moon in search of five valuable treasures, using his cane as a makeshift 2-in-1 weapon and pogo stick. Because of the difference in resolution between the Game Boy and the NES, the handheld version isn't a complete copy: some stages had to be tweaked to fit the smaller screen. In one sense it's improved, though, because Scrooge's pogo stick is easier to pull off (press B in mid-air, instead of Down and B in the NES version). ■

FACT

The original ending had Scrooge tell his nephews that friends are more important than money, but Disney felt it was out of character so it became 'I really am the richest duck in the world'.

DUCKTALES 2

Year 1993
Publisher Capcom
Developer Make Software



MUCH LIKE THE NES version, the Game Boy version of DuckTales was Capcom's bestselling game on the system. Naturally, then, when the sequel was released it came in both console and handheld flavours again. As in the console version, the Game Boy port of DuckTales 2 sees Scrooge heading to Niagara Falls, the Bermuda Triangle, Mu, Egypt and Scotland as he tries to find pieces of a treasure map. Again, some changes have been made to the Game Boy version to compensate for its smaller screen, meaning enemies and treasure are often found in different locations, but this time the changes are more noticeable and the stage layouts are pretty different meaning it feels a little more like its own game. ■

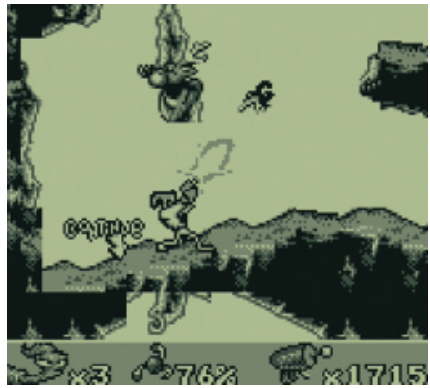
FACT

DuckTales 2 came right at the end of the NES's life and is therefore pretty expensive these days. The Game Boy version is more common and therefore a little cheaper.

EARTHWORM JIM

Year Publisher Developer

1995 Playmates Interactive
Eurocom



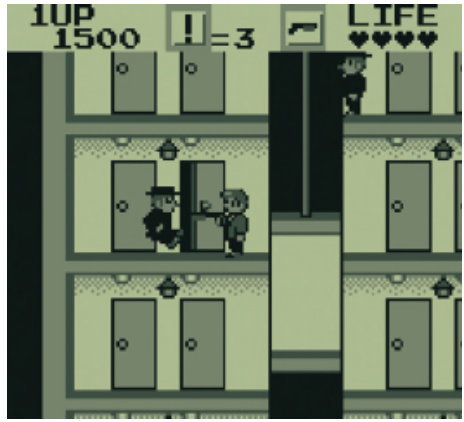
THE 16-BIT VERSIONS of Earthworm Jim were critically acclaimed for their superb animations and visual jokes. While you may think that it would be impossible to scale this down to the Game Boy without cutting out almost all of what makes the game enjoyable, Eurocom's port is actually pretty reasonable, all things considered. Only one stage has been removed (the one set in the space lab, inventively named Level 5), most of the soundtrack has been recreated in 8-bit and while the controls have been compromised, it's not awful: you tap B to use Jim's head whip and hold it down to fire the gun, instead of each having its own button. Obviously not the best version, but arguably as good as it could be. ■

FACT

The Select button doesn't do anything in the game, but the manual claims it 'turns on Mrs Schultz's porch light in Germany, so quit pressing it'.

ELEVATOR ACTION

Year Publisher Developer 1991 Taito Taito



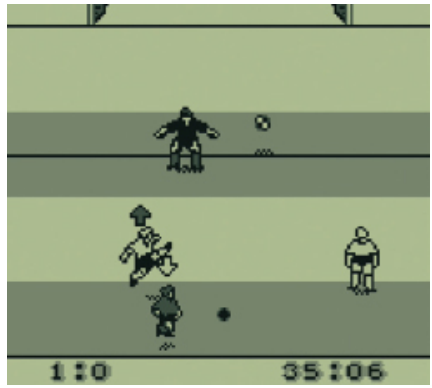
AGENT 17 HAS a top secret mission. A criminal organisation has ended up in possession of some valuable computer disks, so Agent 17 has to land on the roof of their building, break in through the top floor and make his way to the bottom, retrieving the disk and killing any goons he encounters along the way. Should he make it all the way to the basement, a getaway car will be waiting for him. Elevator Action was originally released in arcades in 1983 and the Game Boy version is one of those rare ports that's actually better than the source material. While the screen may be zoomed in more, it plays a little faster and the sprites are more detailed. ■

FACT

The arcade version was sold as Taito's first conversation kit, meaning arcade owners could turn their existing Jungle Hunt, Alpine Ski, Wild Western or Front Line cabinets into Elevator Action ones.

ELITE SOCCER

Year 1994
Publisher GameTek
Developer Denton Designs



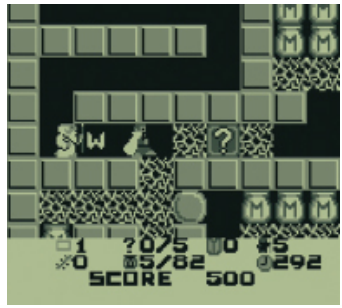
RELEASED JUST IN time for World Cup USA 94, Elite Soccer (known simply as Soccer in Europe) is based on Rage Software's Striker series of football games. Like those titles, the pitch scrolls vertically and plays a fairly solid game of football despite the limitations of the handheld. The rather convenient timing of the release means there's of course a World Cup mode in here, but the six groups don't match those of the real tournament. That's partly because not all the teams who actually qualified are in there: of the 24 teams available England, France and Japan weren't actually in USA 94, while Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Bolivia were actually in the tournament but aren't in Elite Soccer. ■

FACT

Denton Designs was founded by former members of Imagine Software. Imagine collapsed after failing to deliver Bandersnatch, a game so notorious a *Black Mirror* episode was named after it.

EXODUS: JOURNEY TO THE PROMISED LAND

Year	*Publisher*	*Developer*
1992	Wisdom Tree	Color Dreams



EXODUS WAS THE first of five Christian games released by unlicensed publisher Color Dreams via its religious label Wisdom Tree. It was designed to make kids learn more about their faith by Trojan-horsing it into their brainboxes through a video game. It's based on Color Dreams' Crystal Mines, which itself is a knock-off of Boulder Dash (thou shalt not steal, etc). Playing as Moses, you have to lead the Israelites to the Promised Land, which in video game form means you have to go through a bunch of underground stages shooting W's at enemies. These W's represent the word of God, you see. Skill will only get you halfway: when you beat a level you have to answer five Bible trivia questions before you can proceed. ■

FACT

The game's music is Father Abraham, a Christian children's song about the spiritual ancestor of all believers. It's not known whether he shot 'W's at people too.

EXTRA BASES

Year Publisher Developer 1991 Bandai Namco

AT FIRST GLANCE, this looks practically identical to Nintendo's own Baseball game (albeit running much faster and smoother). In reality, it's a western port of the eighth game in Namco's Family Stadium (aka Famitsa) series of Japanese baseball games. Like other Game Boy baseball titles of its era it's fairly limited, though there is at least a basic password system which lets you keep track of the teams you've beaten, enabling you to try to beat every team in the game and win a 'perfect season'. There are 14 teams in the game but it's practically impossible to tell which (if any) is the best, because the team names are single letters (A, T, O etc) and there are no stats. There are two stadiums, at least. ■

FACT

The Game Boy got three more Famitsa games but none of them were released outside of Japan. The last one, Famitsa 4, was exclusive to Japan-only compilation Namco Gallery Vol 2.

F-1 RACE

Year Publisher Developer 1991 Nintendo Nintendo

THE ORIGINAL F1 RACE was released on the Famicom in Japan in 1984, and never made it to the west. That changed with this Game Boy sequel, which gained an international release along with its new hyphen. There are nine tracks in the game and the goal is the same in each: beat every other competitor and finish the race in first place to proceed to the next one. Racing is solid enough and you can also hold Up on the D-Pad to activate a nitro boost on the straights. The game was perhaps most notable for being the first game to support the Game Boy Four Player Adapter, a multitap that let four players connect their handhelds together and race each other. ■

FACT

Every time you win a race you'll be waved at by one of nine Nintendo characters. In order it's Toad, Luigi, Peach, Link, Mario, Samus, Pit, Donkey Kong and finally everyone including Bowser.

F1 POLE POSITION

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Ubisoft Natsu System

ALTHOUGH F1 POLE POSITION was also released on the SNES, this Game Boy 'port' is actually taken from a completely different series, the Japan-only F1 Hero GB published by Varie. This is a localised version of the second game, Satoru Nakajima: F1 Hero GB 92, which has a similar look and feel to F-1 Race (and even includes four-player support too). Although the Japanese game it's based on has fake racer names, this Ubisoft-released localisation adds the official F1 licence, meaning you'll find yourself up against Andretti, Prost, Mansell and the likes. Before you can race on each of the 16 tracks in Grand Prix mode, you first have to rank among the top 16 times in Qualifying. ■

FACT

Satoru Nakajima, the first ever full-time Japanese F1 racer, lent his name to eight F1 Hero games in Japan, spanning the Famicom, Game Boy, Mega Drive and Super Famicom.

F-15 STRIKE EAGLE

Year Publisher Developer

1993 MicroProse NMS Software

ORIGINALLY RELEASED ON a variety of home computers throughout the ‘80s, F-15 Strike Eagle was eventually ported to the NES in 1992. The Game Boy version, which came the following year, is mainly based on this NES offering, with its seven missions essentially replicating those on the Nintendo console. The game is played from a firstperson perspective and sees you taking part in fast-based dogfights while looking out for the primary target, which has to be destroyed for the mission to be deemed a success. The shift to the smaller Game Boy screen means some changes: your plane’s bullets, for example, are much larger than they are in other versions of the game, but it’s relatively faithful to the NES version.

FACT

Oddly, while the NES missions use real place names (Libya, the Iraq/Kuwait border, Baghdad) the Game Boy version replaces them with fake ones (Mesnia, Ashlam Coast, Ismailia).

FACEBALL 2000

Year 1991
Publisher Bullet-Proof Software
Developer Xanth Software

FACEBALL 2000 BEGAN life on the Atari ST computer in 1987 as MIDI Maze, before its developer Xanth Software ported it to the Game Boy. Set in a computer-generated world, you take control of a smiley avatar called a HAPPYFACE and guide it through a polygonal arena, shooting at other avatars in the world. The game has two modes: CyberScape consists of 75 stages where the goal is to reach the exit while destroying the enemy Smiloids patrolling the area. Arena, meanwhile, is a multiplayer affair where the first player to get ten 'tags' wins the game. Both modes can be played with 1–4 players: if you play CyberScape with friends it's a coop affair, while playing Arena alone adds bot opponents. ■

FACT

The game code supports up to 16 players but a special connector required to chain together 16 Game Link cables wasn't approved by Nintendo, so it only uses the official Four Player Adapter.

FASTEST LAP

Year 1992
Publisher NTVIC
Developer KID

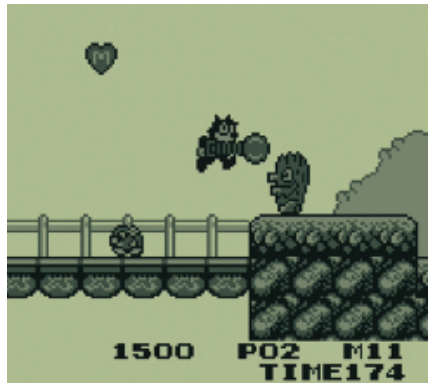
AS YOU'LL ALREADY know if you've been reading through this book in order, the Game Boy wasn't exactly lacking when it came to F1 games. While most of these were played with a 'chase' camera behind the car, however, Fastest Lap instead goes for an overhead approach, with arrows on the track showing the player when they have to turn. There are 16 tracks in the game, and the main World Tour mode has you trying to get the fastest lap (fittingly) in a few qualifying sessions before the actual race. Racer names are all fake, as are the four car manufacturers, though the latter's logos at least make it clear they're based on real companies (so McLaren, Jordan, Ferrari and Tyrrell become McLeen, London, Fenner and TelTel). ■

FACT

The game has an odd option on the title screen called Tel Con. When you choose it, it lets you pick a track, then nothing appears to happen.

FELIX THE CAT

Year 1993
Publisher Hudson Soft / Sony
Developer Shimada Kikaku



CARTOON STAR FELIX is upset: his girlfriend Kitty has been kidnapped by the Professor, who's taken her far away. The Professor's trying to get Felix's magic bag of tricks, and he reckons he can steal it if he can coax Felix into chasing after him. It's up to Felix to track down the Professor, defeating various enemies along the way. Felix starts with an extendable boxing glove weapon and as he collects little Felix head power-ups he can use the magic bag to upgrade to new items, such as a magician's hat (which fires magic beams) or a motorcycle which fires out the word 'BO' for some reason. Although it's a port of the NES game it has fewer stages: just 11 compared to 25. ■

FACT

A bootleg port of the NES version was released on the Mega Drive in Russia. There's a subtle clue it's not official: when you get Game Over you see a gory image of Felix ripping his own face off.

FERRARI GRAND PRIX CHALLENGE

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Acclaim System 3 / NMS Software

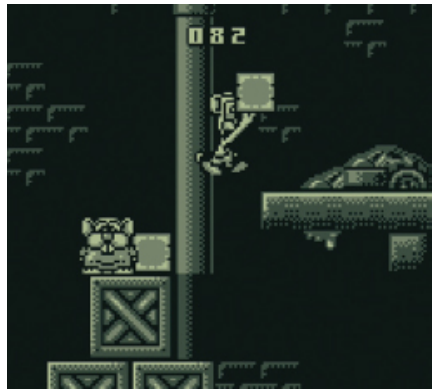
ANOTHER F1 GAME for the Game Boy, this one doesn't have any official F1 licensing but does at least let players race through a full 16-race calendar in the same order as the 1990 Formula One World Championship (albeit against made-up drivers). Not every race is a given, however: before you can actually take part in the race you have to complete a single qualifying lap within a set time: fail to do so and you won't even make the starting grid. While the racers are fictional the tracks are based on the real circuits: naturally there isn't a lot of extra decoration but the game does at least put cityscapes in the background of tracks that have them in real life.

FACT

Although it replicates the 1990 F1 season, there is one error here: the Spain track is set at the Circuit de Catalunya whereas in real life the Spain GP that year was held at Jerez.

THE FIDGETTS

Year 1993
Publisher Jaleco / Elite Systems
Developer Game Over



THIS PUZZLE PLATFORMER tells the story of a family of mice who decide to leave their country barn and move to America for a new life. During their trip, brothers Freddie and Frankie are separated from the rest of the family, so they have to work together to get back to the docks and meet their parents again. It's basically An American Tail, then, with Freddie and Frankie instead of Fievel. Both characters share the stage and the player can swap between them with the Select button. Each has different skills – Frankie (the tall one) can jump higher, while Freddie can squeeze through smaller gaps – and both have to reach the end of each of the 19 stages to clear it. ■

FACT

Pressing B + Up on the title screen of the Japanese version reveals a hidden message from programmer Simon Golding, in which he mentions his upcoming child and says RIP to his grandma.

FIFA INTERNATIONAL SOCCER

Year 1995
Publisher Malibu Games
Developer Probe Entertainment

THE ORIGINAL MEGA Drive release of FIFA was an enormous success so it was promptly ported to almost every format going at the time. The Game Boy version initially appears to be an impressive recreation: most of the national teams from the 16-bit version are present and accounted for (the same rosters of fictional players and all), and it's clear that effort was made to replicate the graphics as well as possible, the oddly tiny ball aside. However, not only was the game quite slow, the Game Boy also struggled to handle so many large sprites on-screen at the same time, leading to rather extreme instances of flickering, with players appearing and disappearing as the handheld tries to juggle them all. ■

FACT

Despite its issues, FIFA (and its sequels) is one of the best examples of Super Game Boy enhancement. Plugging the cartridge into it turns the game full colour, giving every team the right kits.

FIFA SOCCER 96

Year 1995
Publisher Black Pearl Software
Developer Probe Entertainment

THE SECOND FIFA game on the Game Boy improves on its predecessor in almost every way. This time the international teams are joined by club teams from the Brazilian, English, French, German, Italian, Dutch, American and Spanish leagues. It doesn't, however, have the Scottish league like the console versions do, meaning Celtic isn't in there, which is frankly outlandish. Visually the game uses the same sprites as its predecessor (including that bizarre wee ball), but the flickering issue is practically eliminated, meaning it's significantly easier to keep track of what's going on. If you see the Game Boy versions of FIFA and FIFA 96 together in a shop, the latter makes the former obsolete. ■

FACT

The EU cover of FIFA 96 shows Frank de Boer and Jason McAteer. It wasn't taken from the Netherlands vs Ireland World Cup USA 94 match, but from a friendly three months earlier.

FIFA SOCCER 97

Year 1996
Publisher Black Pearl Software
Developer Tiertex Design Studios

AFTER FIFA 96 resolved a lot of the problems of the first Game Boy FIFA, a switch to a new developer for the third entry sadly added a number of new ones. For starters, the club teams were all ditched, returning the game back to international teams only. This was further compounded by an entirely new look, with the previous games' chunky sprites replaced by tiny characters whose running animation makes it look like they're trying to sneak out the front door and go to the pub while their wives are sleeping. The game also plays at a very slow pace, meaning anyone with a copy of FIFA 96 would be wise to stick with it and resist the urge to upgrade. Unless you're upgrading to FIFA 98. ■

FACT

Entering the password BR1CK#D triggers invisible wall mode, where the ball can't go out for throw-ins or goal kicks. Entering K00KY makes the ball fly around in weird, randomly looping directions.

FIFA: ROAD TO WORLD CUP 98

Year 1997
Publisher THQ
Developer Tiertex Design Studios

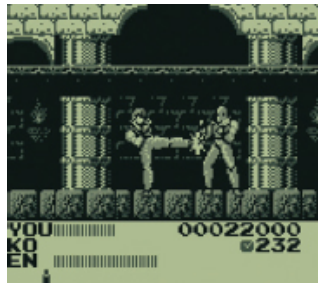
IT WOULD APPEAR that FIFA games are the Game Boy's equivalent of Star Trek motion pictures, in that the even-numbered ones are the good ones. Although FIFA: Road to World Cup 98 retains some of the issues of FIFA 97 including the lack of club teams and that sneaky boozehound running animation, it does make one major change in that the game runs much faster and smoother than it did before. This does make it feel much better to play, and makes up for the fact that its sprites still aren't as impressive as those of FIFA 96. It doesn't, however, make up for the lack of a Game Boy rendition of the console versions' main theme, 'Song 2' by Blur. ■

FACT

Despite the name, the Game Boy version of FIFA 98 doesn't actually have a Road to World Cup mode, instead offering standard Tournament, Playoffs and League modes.

FIGHTING SIMULATOR: 2-IN-1 FLYING WARRIORS

Year	1992
Publisher	Culture Brain
Developer	Culture Brain



THIS IS THE fifth game in the Hiryu no Ken series, which has appeared in other encyclopedias (Flying Dragon on the NES, Ultimate Fighter on SNES, Flying Dragon on N64). As the name suggests, it consists of two different types of gameplay: a side-scrolling action game and a one-on-one fighting game. The 'action' mode switches between both styles and has you playing as the hero, Rick, who has to stop a group of evil Dark Dragon warriors from getting a legendary medallion. The separate oneon- one only mode lets you choose from eight different disciplines, each with their own moves: kung fu, karate, kickboxing, wrestling, boxing, 'martial arts' and the slightly overpowered double swords. Combat is slow and methodical, not all-out carnage. ■

FACT

If you're wondering what makes the 'martial arts' option different to karate and kung fu, the manual says it's a USA-style that mixes techniques from all fighting styles.

FINAL FANTASY ADVENTURE

Year Publisher Developer 1991 Square Square

ALSO KNOWN IN Europe as Mystic Quest, this is a spin-off of the Final Fantasy series which focuses more on action than the typical turn-based combat the series was known for. As such, it plays more like one of the early top-down Zelda games, albeit with RPG-style stats. The game revolves around the life-giving Tree of Mana, and the evil Dark Lord of Glaive's attempt to destroy it and doom the world. Playing as a hero with a name of your choosing, it's up to you to save the day. While intended to be a Final Fantasy game, ultimately this would become the first in an entirely separate series, the Mana games, which would continue with The Secret of Mana on the SNES in 1993. ■

FACT

Among fans the hero is known as Sumo, because that's the name used in screenshots in the game's manual. In novels and manga adaptations, though, he's called Duke.

THE FINAL FANTASY LEGEND

Year Publisher Developer 1990 Square Square

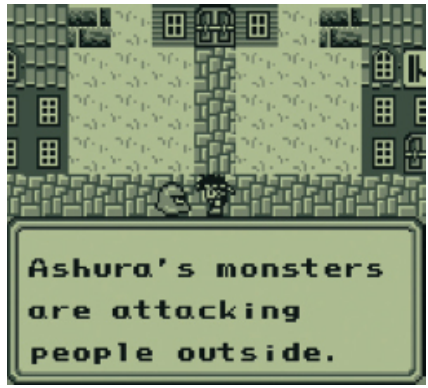
WHILE FINAL FANTASY Adventure started as a spin-off, The Final Fantasy Legend was never supposed to have anything to do with Final Fantasy, and was given the name in the west to help boost sales. In reality, this is the first game in the SaGa series, and has players creating a character – either a human, a mutant or a monster – with the aim being to ascend a huge tower in the middle of the world in an attempt to reach the door to paradise at the top. Battles are turn-based but the species of the hero (and the other members of their party) affects gameplay somewhat. Play as a monster, for example, and they'll be able to eat the meat of any other monsters defeated. ■

FACT

The game isn't entirely without Final Fantasy connections: it was created by Akitoshi Kawazu, who helped to design the first two Final Fantasy games.

FINAL FANTASY LEGEND II

Year 1991
Publisher Square
Developer Square



THE SECOND SAGA was again branded as a Final Fantasy in the west. Once again set around a large tower, players have to visit each of the worlds it links to and collect their MAGI, which are fragments of an ancient goddess statue. Nasty types are looking to collect the MAGI for themselves and become all-powerful, so you have to gather it all before they do. As before, players create their own character but there's a new fourth species: robots. These change their stats depending on what equipment they're using, and can equip multiple types of the same armour. They're also immune to poison and paralysis, but the downside is if they equip a weapon, the number of times they can use it is halved. ■

FACT

All three games were re-released in 2020 on Switch, PC and mobile as Collection of SaGa: Final Fantasy Legend, with new features like fast forward and art galleries.

FINAL FANTASY LEGEND III

Year 1993
Publisher Square
Developer Square

THE FINAL SAGA game (on Game Boy, at least) ditches the tower in favour of a new plot involving the Water Entity, a strange being that's engulfed the world in a huge flood. It's up to the player and their party to collect parts for the Talon – a special ship which can travel through time and dimensions – and use it to find a way to stop the Water Entity. This time you can only start off as a human character, but the gimmick this time is that you can transform into a beast, monster, cyborg or robot over the course of your adventure by consuming the meat or equipping the mechanical parts dropped by enemies. You are what you eat, basically. ■

FACT

The series would continue beyond the Game Boy for decades, with such titles as the Romancing SaGa trilogy and the SaGa Frontier games.

FIRE FIGHTER

Year Publisher Developer

1992 Mindscape Teeny Weeny Games

THIS QUIRKY AND fairly rare European release has you playing as Eric, a firefighter in Teeny Weeny City. Someone in the city's clearly been arson around because 10 buildings are ablaze, and it's up to Eric to enter each one and rescue all the men, women and children trapped inside. Eric is equipped with a hose which can be used to put out small fires, but he can also collect axes to deal with the numerous enemies, which include jack-in-the-boxes and ringing telephones for some reason. Small fires are continually spawning in each building, so the aim is to carry everyone to safety (over your shoulder, naturally) before the fire spreads too much and the building collapses. ■

FACT

Should you clear all 10 buildings of potential victims, the game ends outside the steps of Teenytown Hall, where the mayor gives you a medal for bravery.

FISH DUDE

Year 1991
Publisher SOFEL
Developer Salio

FISH DUDE IS, according to the manual, ‘the coolest fish around’. He’s clearly not too cool to engage in cannibalism, though, which is why this game involves eating a set number of other (seemingly less cool) fish in order to progress through each stage. Fish Dude isn’t a one-gulp kind of critter, either: when you approach a smaller fish you have to keep pressing the A button to chew and eventually swallow the fish. The problem with this is that while Fish Dude is chowing down, he can’t move, which leaves him open to attack by his nemeses Big Fish, Seagull and the Cat on the Boat, all of whom are hungry and looking for a cool snack. It’s a case of eating and avoiding, then. ■

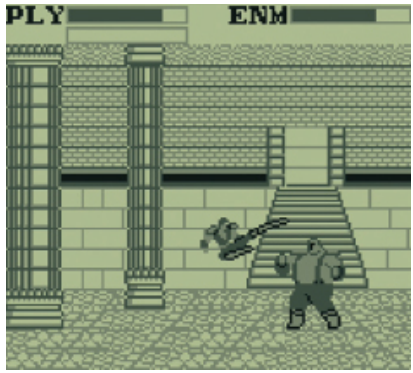
FACT

Despite its relative simplicity Fish Dude is fairly rare, with boxed copies often selling for between $700–$1,000 on eBay.

FIST OF THE NORTH STAR

Year Publisher Developer

1990 Electro Brain Shouei System



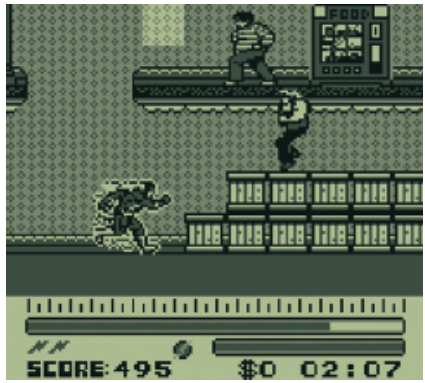
LISTING THE FULL name of this one – Fist of the North Star: 10 Big Brawls for the King of the Universe – would have taken up half the page. It's a one-on-one fighting game (the first ever fighter on Game Boy) in which players choose to play either as series protagonist Kenshiro, or one of 10 other characters from the manga and anime, and proceed to batter their way through the others until nobody is left and their character is the ruler of the new postapocalyptic world. Combat is very basic, with punches, kicks and the ability to throw projectiles by holding down the punch button. There's also a Team mode where players can put together squads of five fighters for an elimination battle. ■

FACT

This was the seventh game based on Fist of the North Star, but only the second (after the NES game) to keep that name for its western release.

THE FLASH

Year Publisher Developer 1991 THQ Equilibrium



THIS ACTION PLATFORMER was based on the short-lived TV adaptation of *The Flash*, which ran for nine months between 1990–91. In the game, The Flash's nemesis The Trickster (who's definitely nothing like The Joker, honest) has escaped from prison and planted bombs all around Central City. It's up to our hero to speedrun his way around the city and deactivate the bombs, while taking on other villains like Mirror Master and Captain Cold along the way. Unusually for a console platformer, The Flash makes players jump with Up on the D-Pad, instead assigning the A and B buttons to kicks and punches. By pressing both buttons down the player can activate his speedy 'surge' move, which gets him out of tight spots. ■

FACT

In the show, The Flash was played by John Wesley Shipp. He went on to play Dawson's dad in *Dawson's Creek*, who dies in a car crash after he drops some ice cream while driving.

THE FLINTSTONES

Year 1994
Publisher Ocean
Developer Twilight

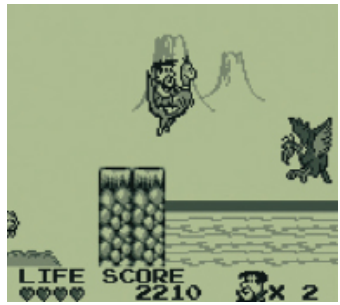
BASED ON THE liveaction movie that failed to convince anyone to buy into the idea that Kyle MacLachlan could ever be a bad guy, The Flintstones is a platformer in which players have to rescue Pebbles and Bamm Bamm from the evil Cliff Vandercave. While the platforming action is straightforward enough (the odd sprite-based version of John Goodman as Fred aside), there's also a handful of mini-games – bowling, a memory game, a shooting gallery, tic-tac-toe – which appear at the end of each stage. The game also has a bunch of arcade machines dotted around: if you have a coin in your possession when you pass one of these you can play Stone Age knock-offs of Space Invaders, Pac-Man and Snake. ■

FACT

Additional graphics in the game were added by David Bland, who would go on to design the Grand Theft Auto handheld spinoffs Liberty City Stories and Vice City Stories.

THE FLINTSTONES: KING ROCK TREASURE ISLAND

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Taito Taito



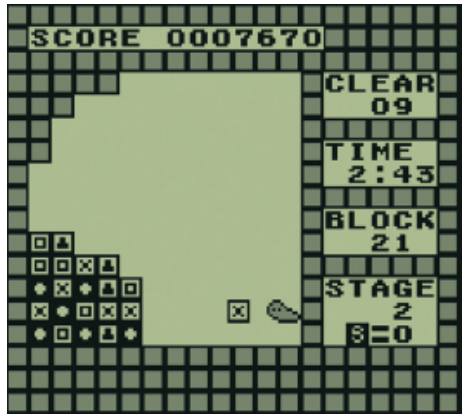
IF THE IDEA of Fred Flintstone with a realistic face keeps you awake at night, you may prefer this Taito offering which goes with the more traditional Hanna-Barbera animated style. After Fred finds a treasure map at work, he decides to head off in search of said treasure. The game consists of seven stages: Bedrock, Desert Rock, a car stage, Dark Ship, Sea Bottom, another car stage and the daunting King Rock Castle. Fred is armed with axes, which he can throw at enemies, but they don't kill with the first hit. Instead, they stun enemies in place, letting you jump onto them and use them as makeshift platforms. Should you not need them for this reason, a second axe kills them. ■

FACT

Spoilers: it turns out the treasure is a magic wand which grants any wish. Fred takes it home and wishes for a giant piece of meat, even though he gets one at the end of every episode of the show.

FLIPULL

Year Publisher Developer 1990 Taito Taito



VINTAGE EUROPEAN COMPUTER game players may recognise this game as Plotting, which is the name it went by on the likes of the C64, Spectrum and Amiga. It's a simple but rather fiendish little puzzle game in which you control a little blob who can throw and catch blocks. When you throw a block at one with a matching shape, you'll destroy it: you'll then get back the block that was sitting next to it. With this block you then hit another matching one, and so on until you run out of possible moves. There are 50 stages in total, and as you proceed the levels get filled with progressively more obstacles hindering your progress, such as pipes which block or divert your blocks. ■

FACT

The cartridge contains little animations that were supposed to play after every 10 levels, but they don't actually appear in the game.

FOOTBALL INTERNATIONAL

Year Publisher Developer 1991 Bandai TOSE

SIMPLY KNOWN IN its native Japan as Soccer, this is a straightforward football game with eight teams in it – Germany, Italy, France, Spain, England (represented by the Union Jack instead of the English flag), Brazil, Japan and USA. As well as one-off Exhibition matches players can also take part in a World Cup mode, but this isn't a typical tournament like you'd expect from a mode with such a name. Instead, it's essentially an 'arcade' mode where you choose a team then have to beat the other seven in a row to be crowned champion. While the view is fairly close to the action it does switch to a zoomed out view whenever the ball's kicked high into the air, making it easier to position players. ■

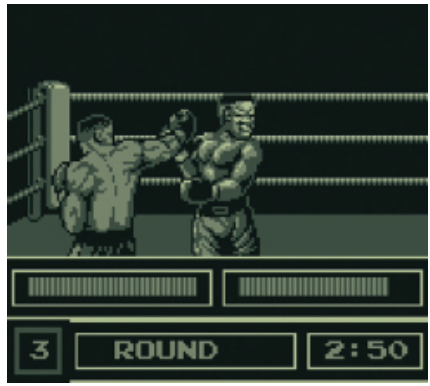
FACT

If you're buying the Japanese version, get Sports Collection instead: it's a compilation cart featuring this and four other separately released sports games.

FOREMAN FOR REAL

Year Publisher Developer

1995 Acclaim Software Creations



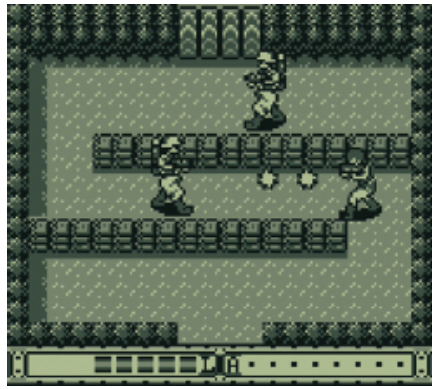
THE SECOND OF two boxing games starring the only boxer to name all five of his sons George (yes, really), Foreman For Real only lets you actually play as George Foreman in Exhibition matches. If you're going to take on the game's main Tournament mode, you have to choose from one of the other 19 fictional boxers available, be that George Shawkey, Willie Ramos or Carmen Paradiso. Tournament sees you taking on four randomly chosen opponents until you face off against Big George himself in the fifth fight. The combat takes some getting used to, because punches take an exceptionally long time to throw. Once you start holding down the button, you have time to cook something on a George Foreman Grill before it lands. ■

FACT

Each of the fictional boxers has their own nickname. Carmen Paradiso's nickname is simply Fist, which feels a little on the nose (literally).

FORTIFIED ZONE

Year 1991
Publisher Jaleco
Developer Jaleco



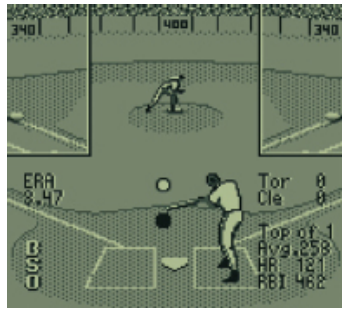
THIS OVERHEAD ACTION game has you trying to infiltrate four separate ‘fortified zones’ – a field, a jungle, a cave and a military complex – in an attempt to destroy the complex. There are two playable characters, each with their own health bar, and you can pause the game and switch between them both at will. Each has their own abilities: Masato can pick up and use special weapons, giving him a more diverse arsenal, while Mizuki is able to jump, allowing her to navigate some obstacle-filled rooms easier. Each stage is played in a Zelda-like maze, and ends with a large boss to defeat. Fortified Zone was the first of three games, the third of which was released in the west as SNES title Operation Logic Bomb.

FACT

The manual invites players to join the Jaleco Major Player’s Club, stressing the rather compelling argument that ‘you get nuttin’ if you don’t join’.

FRANK THOMAS BIG HURT BASEBALL

Year 1995
Publisher Acclaim
Developer Realtime Associates



IT'S OKAY, DON'T worry: Big Hurt was just the nickname of Chicago White Sox designated hitter and five-time MLB All- Star Frank Thomas. While this baseball game doesn't have the official MLB licence – meaning team nicknames and logos are absent, leaving generic teams like Cleveland, Toronto, etc. – it does have the MLBPA licence, meaning all the player names and rosters are accurate. The game has your typical Exhibition match option as well as a Season mode, letting you choose between 13, 39, 52, 144 or a full 162-game season. There's also the option to play an All-Star game (rather fitting, given Mr Thomas's accolades) or take part in a Home Run Derby. It's a feature-packed game, then, if a little slow on the field. ■

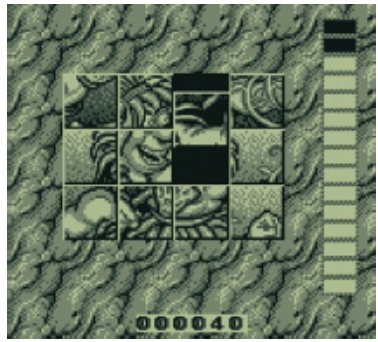
FACT

Spare a thought for Stan Williams, who played in the MLB between 1958 and 1972 then coached until 1999. He was known as Big Hurt first, but Thomas become synonymous with the name.

FRANKY, JOE & DIRK: ON THE TILES

Year Publisher Developer

1993 Mindscape Audio Visual Magic



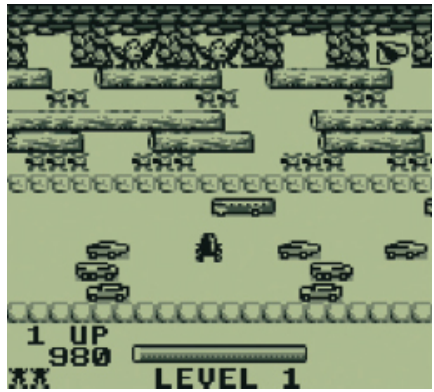
FORGET THE AVENGERS and Super Smash Bros, there's no greater crossover than On the Tiles, which takes the heroes of Dr Franken, Joe & Mac and Dragon's Lair and jams all three in one cartridge. Don't let ideas of heroic teamwork start dancing in your head, however: On the Tiles is little more than a puzzle game featuring that most notorious of tasks, the sliding puzzle. It does at least attempt to do something different by throwing items into the mix: at random times an item will appear on a square and if you slide that square before it disappears it'll trigger. In reality though, these can make things even more frustrating because some of them lock certain squares from moving, while others randomly shuffle the squares. ■

FACT

You can't say Mindscape doesn't do hyperbole: the box claims this is 'the most mindblowingly addictive puzzle game ever'.

FROGGER

Year 1998
Publisher Majesco
Developer Majesco



THIS IS A straightforward port of Konami's 1981 arcade classic Frogger. For those not familiar with the game, you have to guide five frogs from the bottom of the screen to their homes at the top of the screen. The problem is that in the way stands a busy highway followed by a treacherous lake, meaning you have to avoid cars then jump across floating logs to reach your destination (because even though they're frogs they apparently can't go in the water, for reasons). Each stage adds new hazards, from alligators who briefly appear at a random home to eat frogs at the last minute, to snakes appearing in the previously safe zone between road and river. The Game Boy version has a two-player mode, with players taking turns.

FACT

Frogger featured in an episode of *Seinfeld*, in which George bought an old Frogger machine and, fittingly, had to try to get it across a busy road.

GAME & WATCH GALLERY

Year	*Publisher*	*Developer*
1997	Nintendo	Nintendo

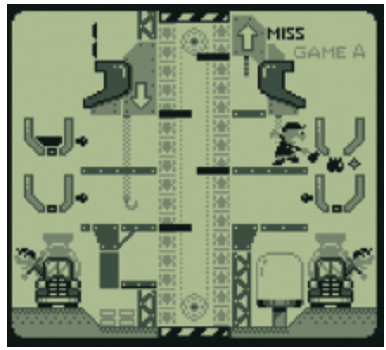
AS THE NAME suggests, this compilation pays tribute to the Game Boy's predecessor, the Game & Watch handheld. Four Game & Watch titles are included here: Manhole, Fire, Octopus and Oil Panic. While each can be played in their original, bleepy-bloopy manner, each also has a new Modern version which gives it a 1997 makeover starring Mario characters. The classic version of Fire, for example, has two generic firemen catching standard Game & Watch characters falling from a building, whereas the Modern version has you controlling Mario and Luigi as they catch falling Toads, Yoshis and Donkey Kong Jrs. There's also a Gallery Corner mode, in which getting high scores on the four main game unlocks (unplayable) animations of 16 Game & Watch titles through history. ■

FACT

This was known as Game Boy Gallery in Japan but was called Game Boy Gallery 2 in Australia, for reasons explained in the next entry.

GAME BOY GALLERY

Year Publisher Developer 1995 Nintendo TOSE



GAME & WATCH Gallery would go on to spawn sequels but it wasn't actually the first entry in the series. That would be Game Boy Gallery, which arrived two years earlier and was only released in Europe and Australia. There are five vintage Game & Watch games to choose from here: Ball, Vermin, Flagman, Manhole and Cement Factory. Unlike its successor Game & Watch Gallery, there's no option to choose between classic and modern versions of each game: you simply get a sort of half-way house where the gameplay is identical but the visuals have been enhanced and there's now music. This may upset purists, because it means the classic Game & Watch character (later known as Mr Game & Watch) has been replaced by human characters. ■

FACT

The Game & Watch version of Cement Factory was actually called Mario's Cement Factory, but since Mario's nowhere to be seen in this version it was renamed.

GAME BOY CAMERA

Year Publisher Developer	1998 Nintendo Nintendo / Jupiter

DIGITAL CAMERAS WERE still very much a luxury item in the late ‘90s so the idea of turning your Game Boy into one was certainly appealing. The result was the Game Boy Camera, a cartridge with a lens at the top that made it look like a single big eyeball was sticking out of your Game Boy. The camera was very rudimentary, allowing players to take grayscale photos in 128×112 resolution and only storing up to 30 images, so I wouldn’t take it to your friend’s wedding or anything. What it did do, however, was let players have fun with their photos, including features like time lapse, animation and a mirror mode. It could even swivel 180 degrees to let you take selfies, before that was even a thing. If there were any photos you were particularly fond of, you could connect your handheld to the Game Boy Printer (sold separately, naturally) and print your favourite photos out as tiny stickers. The cartridge also includes a feature called Game Face, where you can take a photo of your face and use it in a number of included games (such as a shoot ‘em up called Space Fever II where your face is the final boss, and a recreation of the Game & Watch title Ball with your face

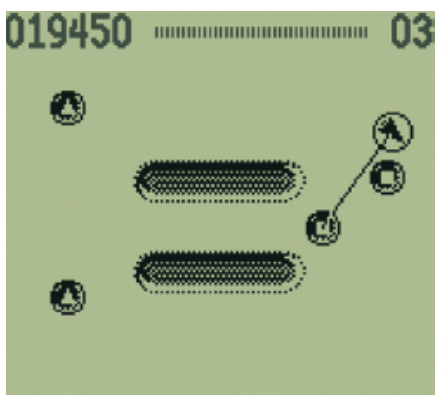
on the player character). The Game Boy Camera was a success: it even earned a place in the 1999 *Guinness Book of World Records* as the world's smallest digital camera. ■

FACT

In 2017, astrophotographer Alexander Pietrow managed to attach his Game Boy Camera to a telescope from 1838 and used it to take a photo of the moon.

THE GAME OF HARMONY

Year 1991
Publisher Accolade
Developer The Code Monkeys



THIS QUIRKY PHYSICS-BASED game was known as E-Motion in Europe, but in North America it was given this rather more musical title. The game consists of 50 stages, each of which contains a series of black orbs with shapes on them. You control a white orb, and can move the other orbs by bumping into them. The aim is to make all the orbs disappear by causing them to collide into each other. If two orbs with the same shape collide, they'll both disappear, but if two with different shapes collide a third orb will be 'born', making things trickier. Soon other gimmicks are thrown into the mix, like

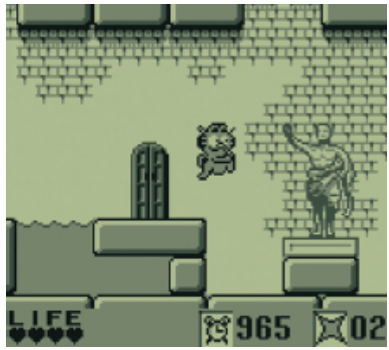
elastic wires that join orbs together (and make them more likely to bump into each other). ■

FACT

It's down to personal taste whether The Game of Harmony or E-Motion is the better title, but they're definitely both better than the game's working title, Sphericule.

GARFIELD LABYRINTH

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Kemco Kotobuki Systems



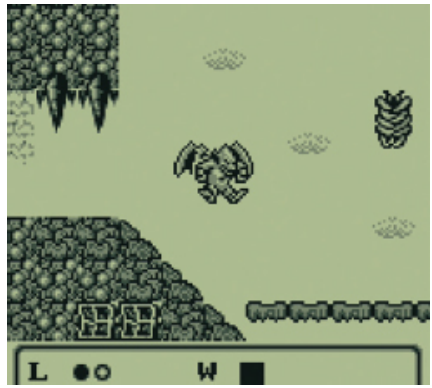
THIS IS THE fifth game in the Crazy Castle series and the third on Game Boy (see the two Bugs Bunny games earlier). Because of Kemco's madcap licensing shenanigans it was known as Mickey Mouse IV in Japan, and The Real Ghostbusters in North America (you'll see it later). Europeans instead got Garfield in the starring role, and while the game is identical – it's a platformer where you avoid enemies while collecting stars to unlock each level – the plot is different. In this one, Garfield and Odie are playing near some ancient ruins but Garfield falls into an underground labyrinth, so he has to collect the stars to get back to the surface. It's fun enough, but if you have The Real Ghostbusters you already have this too. ■

FACT

Because it was originally a Mickey Mouse game about finding Minnie, the ending is an odd scene in which Garfield and Odie take a romantic balloon ride and dance in a meadow.

GARGOYLE'S QUEST

Year Publisher Developer 1990 Capcom Capcom



THE RED ARREMER, a sort of flying gargoyle demon thing, is a notable enemy in the Ghosts 'n Goblins / Ghouls 'n Ghosts series. Firebrand is the most popular character of this species, because he was the hero (rather than a villain) of the spin-off series Gargoyle's Quest. In this, the first of the series, Firebrand is tasked with protecting the Ghoul Realm from a group of evil creatures called Destroyers, who come from another universe. The game is split into top-down RPG style exploration sections and 2D side-scrolling action platformer sections. In the latter, Firebrand has the ability to cling to walls and fire projectiles, and though he can't fly around at will he can hover for a brief period. ■

FACT

Firebrand is green on the box, even though the character is red. The reason is similar to Kirby's Dream Land: because he looked green on the Game Boy screen, he was coloured that way.

GAUNTLET II

Year 1991
Publisher Mindscape
Developer Eastridge Technology

LIKE OTHER GAMES in the series, Gauntlet II is a top-down action game where the player has to make their way through a series of maze-like dungeons (over 100 of them in this case), killing enormous swarms of enemies and collecting treasure along the way. Your health is represented by an ever-decreasing number and you have to keep topping it up with food or else you'll die. There are four playable characters – Warrior, Valkyrie, Wizard and Elf – and each has their own stats. The Game Boy version suffers from some slowdown when things get too busy, but it does replicate much of the speech from the arcade version, including such classic lines as 'Warrior needs food badly'. ■

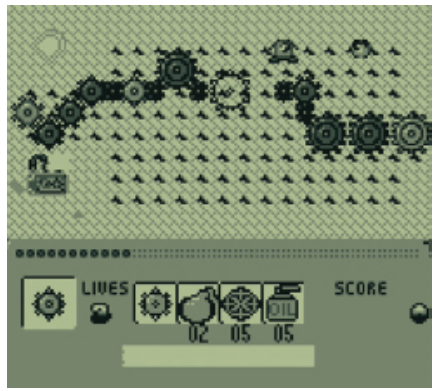
FACT

The US box mostly copies and pastes the blurb from the NES version.

This means it wrongly states the game supports 1–4 players when in reality the Game Boy version only supports 1–2.

GEAR WORKS

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Sony Imagesoft Teque Interactive



FINALLY: YOUR DREAM of being a master clocksmith can come true. Gear Works tasks you with transforming 12 world monuments into giant clocks, from the Leaning Tower of Pisa, to the Sydney Opera House, to Big Ben in London (even though that already has a giant clock, which makes the endeavour a bit pointless). Each monument consists of a group of stages, and the goal in each stage is to join one spinning gear with another one by placing other gears of varying sizes between them, eventually creating one long chain. Naturally, only gears of certain sizes will work next to each other, and other hindrances get in the way including temperature, rust, interfering little creatures called Poffins and a time limit. ■

FACT

The manual describes each stage as a ‘wonder of the world’, but only one of them (the Great Pyramid of Giza) actually is one.

GEORGE FOREMAN'S KO BOXING

Year 1992
Publisher Acclaim
Developer Beam Software

AFTER RETIRING IN 1977, George Foreman returned a decade later and went on a streak of 24 wins before losing to Evander Holyfield in a title match. Still, there was no denying that 'Big George' was back, regardless, and this time he was up for putting his name to numerous products (such as his famous grills). This included video games, the first of which was KO Boxing. Released on various formats, the Game Boy version is similar to the NES game in that it has an overthe- shoulder viewpoint that looks and plays similarly to Punch-Out!! but lacks the nuance of that game's dodge-and-hit control system and is more of a slugfest. It does at least let you play as Foreman in career mode, unlike the sequel Foreman For Real. ■

FACT

At the time of writing, Foreman is the oldest ever heavyweight champ, and was 46 years old when he lost his title. The secondoldest, Vitali Klitschko, was 42 when he lost his.

THE GETAWAY: HIGH SPEED II

Year Publisher Developer 1995 Williams Unexpected Development

NES TITLE HIGH Speed was a video game adaptation of a 1986 Williams pinball machine, and this Game Boy release is based on its 1992 sequel. Like its predecessor, the game has a ‘driving dangerously’ theme and many of its goals involve being a ne’er do well: the multiball feature is activated by running through red lights, and the player has to collect jackpots in order to escape from police chases. There’s also a ‘video mode’ mini-game where you control a car dodging traffic. One thing the handheld interpretation doesn’t have is the same music as its source material: whereas the actual pinball machine uses ZZ Top song ‘La Grange’ to accompany its action, the Game Boy version has completely original music. ■

FACT

Despite claiming it on the box, The Getaway doesn’t support Super Game Boy. The game code contains a PGA European Tour border, a placeholder left over from Unexpected’s last game.

GHOSTBUSTERS II

Year Publisher Developer 1990 Activision HAL Laboratory

NORTH AMERICAN NES owners were disappointed by Activision's Ghostbusters II game, but Europeans also got a second NES offering, developed by HAL, called New Ghostbusters II. Luckily for America, the Game Boy version of Ghostbusters II is based on that HAL game, meaning they could play at least some form of it. That's not to say the NES and Game Boy versions are the same game – each has different level designs – but the core qualities of the NES game remain. The same 'chibi' art style is carried over, players can once again choose from all four Ghostbusters (even Winston, who was often left out during this era) and the aim is still to stun ghosts with one character while an AI-controlled teammate catches them with a trap. ■

FACT

Winston wasn't in the Mega Drive Ghostbusters game, but in 2023 a modder created a new 'fan hack' of the game that added him as a fourth playable character.

GO! GO! TANK

Year	1991
Publisher	Electro Brain
Developer	Copya Systems

GO! GO! TANK is a curious mix of Lemmings, Choplifter and nail-bitingly infuriating physics. A peaceful nation has been occupied by unwelcome forces, so the plan is to bring in tanks to return the land back to its rightful owners. The problem is the terrain is a mess so, playing as a ground support fighter pilot, you have to accompany the first tank and clear the battlefield so it can make its way to the enemy stronghold. Your plane is armed with missiles to take out enemies, as well as a big cargo hook. You have to pick up blocks and drop them onto the land so the tank can ride over them: this is much easier said than done, given that your plane can't stop. ■

FACT

In case it wasn't difficult enough, the game has a two-player mode where each player tries to stun their opponent's tank by dropping bombs on it.

GOAL!

Year 1993
Publisher Jaleco
Developer TOSE

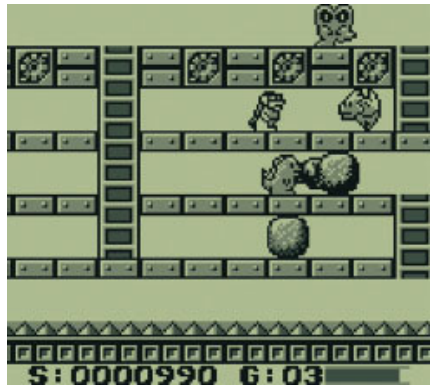
DESPITE SHARING THE same name as the NES title released in 1989, Goal! on the Game Boy is based on a different game. Whereas the NES game is a western port of Moero!! Pro Soccer, the handheld version is a port of J-Cup Soccer. There are 16 international teams to choose from and the game features your standard Exhibition and Super Cup mode options, the latter offering a straightforward knockout set-up. While the isometric viewpoint looks similar to that of the NES game (though the angle doesn't slope quite as dramatically), this time it switches between a zoomed-out view during goal kicks and a zoomed-in view for normal action. Of the NES and Game Boy takes on Goal!, the handheld version arguably holds up better. ■

FACT

Win the Super Cup and you'll see an image of a player lifting the World Cup, which almost certainly wasn't authorised. It's an absolute rebel, this game.

GODZILLA

Year 1990
Publisher Toho / Nintendo
Developer Compile



WHEN YOU SPEND your days beating up monsters things are likely to backfire. That's what happens when a bunch of Godzilla's nemeses decide to kidnap his son Minilla and hide him in a large labyrinth known only as Matrix. It's up to Godzilla to enter Matrix and rescue Minilla, which he does by breaking boulders for some reason. The game consists of 64 stages, which are all connected in a large 8x8 square. When you break all the boulders in a stage you're given a choice of arrows to follow, each taking you to a different stage. The aim, then, is to not only avoid the likes of Rodan, Hedorah and King Ghidora, but also figure out the path to stage 37, where Minilla is being held. ■

FACT

The game has a hidden love note from programmer Yukinori Taniguchi to his then-lover Norie. Taniguchi would go on to found Yuke's, best known for making WWE games between 2000–2018.

GOLF

Year 1990
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Nintendo

RATHER THAN A port of the 1984 NES title, the Game Boy version of Golf is an entirely separate game with its own holes. Whereas the NES take on the sport offers a single 18-hole course, the handheld effort features two courses set in Japan and the USA (the latter is more difficult because its greens slope more). Somewhat unusually for the time, Golf contains the option to save your progress mid-round. By hitting Select and choosing Save Game, the game saves your score, the hole you're currently on and and the exact position of your ball, allowing you to turn off your Game Boy and resume it at a later date. There's also a two-player Match Play mode, though it needs a link cable. ■

FACT

As is the case with Baseball and Tennis, Mario is depicted on the box art for Golf in the west, but is nowhere to be seen on the Japanese box.

GRADIUS: THE INTERSTELLAR ASSAULT

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Konami Konami

IN 1990, KONAMI released Nemesis (see later), a Game Boy spin-off of Gradius. The Interstellar Assault is Nemesis II – and goes by that name in Japan and Europe – but was given the Gradius branding in North America. It uses the same power-up bar from the main series, which lists a range of power-ups at the bottom of the screen. Players collect generic orbs which fill this bar, then 'bank' them when they reach the power-up they want. Naturally, the better ones are near the end, meaning there's a risk/reward strategy: do you bank earlier to get lesser power-ups or risk keeping your ship weak until you can get the better ones? Generally regarded as one of the better western released Game Boy shoot 'em ups. ■

FACT

Konami reduced slowdown by flickering bullets on and off, using the Game Boy screen's ghosting (due to its slow response time) to make them look solid. They'll flicker on an emulator, where there's no ghosting.

GREAT GREED

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Namco Namco

THIS ODD RPG plays like Dragon Quest but has more of an environmental theme. Your protagonist (who you can name, but is called Sierra Sam on the box) is sent through a portal to the Greene Kingdom, where he has to stop the evil Biohazard Harry from polluting the world. Most characters have a food-related name, some of which are subtle (the King's daughters are named things like Cupcake, Candy and Truffle) and some not so much (the sorceress who brings you through the portal is called Microwave). Combat is basic and the manual gives the player lots of advice on what to do next, so despite – or maybe because of – its quirks, it may be a good entry point for 8-bit RPGs. ■

FACT

The game ends with the King letting you choose which of his daughters you want to marry. It all goes a bit wild: as well as the 'sensible' options you can choose his 11-yearold (though you're told you have to wait), the Queen or even the King himself.

GREMLINS 2: THE NEW BATCH

Year Publisher Developer 1991 Sunsoft Sunsoft

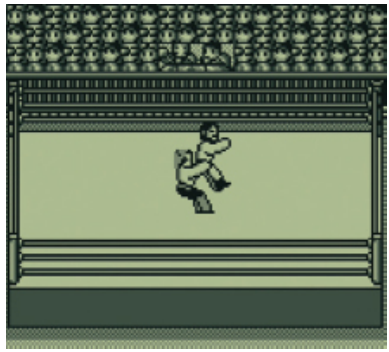
WHILE SUNSOFT'S NES take on Gremlins 2 was a top-down action adventure game, the Game Boy version is a sidescrolling action platformer that feels and sounds slightly similar to Sunsoft's handheld Batman game. The Gremlins have taken over the enormous Clamp Centre building, so it's up to our hero Gizmo to make his way through four areas – the CATV Studio, the genetics lab, the system control centre and the Clamp Centre lobby – killing any Gremlins he comes across. Gizmo can attack enemies with his pencil (which has an extremely short range) but can collect power-ups such as a radio (which lets him shoot a music note), a tool box (which makes him invincible) and a special flaming bow and arrow for the final Spider Gremlin boss. ■

FACT

I hope you can press the A button like a machine, because the game's Punching Bag bonus stage gives you an extra life for hitting it 100 times in just 10 seconds.

HAL WRESTLING

Year Publisher Developer 1990 HAL Laboratory Human Entertainment



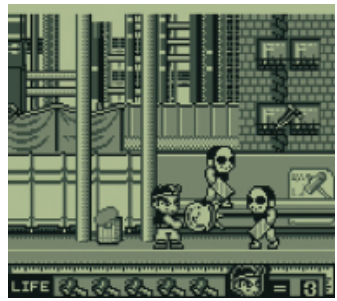
DESPITE HAL'S NAME in the title, this was developed by Human Entertainment, the studio that would become famous among grappling fans for the legendary Fire Pro Wrestling series in Japan. Indeed, HAL Wrestling plays like an early Fire Pro game, with each of the eight playable wrestlers capable of pulling off a surprisingly wide variety of moves for the era, performed by accurately timing button presses when entering a grapple (therefore requiring more skill than just button-bashing). The roster is made up of fictional characters but some have clear real-life inspiration: Super Cyber is supposed to be Jushin Thunder Liger, Big Crusher is meant to be Vader, and Death Monster is based on Dr Death Steve Williams (complete with biting and 'fork in the face' moves). ■

FACT

The game is simply called Pro Wrestling in Japan. Given that there was already an unrelated NES game called Pro Wrestling (and a Master System one), renaming it made sense.

HAMMERIN' HARRY: GHOST BUILDING COMPANY

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Irem Tamtex



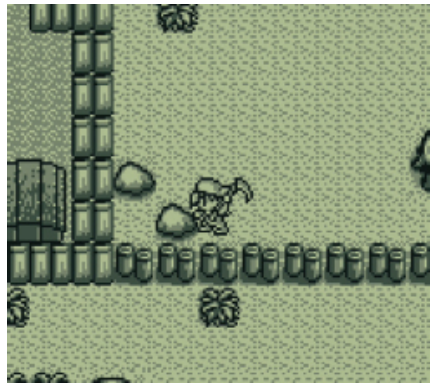
HAMMERIN' HARRY'S CAREER consists of around 10 games, but only a few of these have made it to the west. This Game Boy debut at least made it to Europe, and sees Harry trying to rescue his girlfriend from a bunch of evil ghosts who've destroyed his city and built a massive ghost house in the middle of the rubble. Cue a zany action platformer with impressive graphics for the Game Boy (and the occasional side-scrolling shoot 'em up section thrown in for good measure). Naturally, Harry is armed with his big hammer, which can be used to attack enemies and protect his head. Players can also pick up an iron mace, which is twice the size of the hammer. ■

FACT

At the time of writing, the last game in the series was Hammerin' Hero on the PSP. This was one of the rare entries that did make it to the west (including North America, this time).

HARVEST MOON GB

Year Publisher Developer 1998 Natsume Victor Interactive



THE FARMING GOODNESS of the first Harvest Moon on the SNES led to the release of this – the second in the series and the first handheld version – a year later. After the ghost of your dead grandfather (seriously) asks you to take over his farm, you have to do the spooky sod proud and become a Ranch Master: and you can't be a slacker, because he's going to visit (i.e. haunt) you at the end of winter to judge how you did. By growing and selling crops and eventually buying and tending to livestock, you can turn the old man's rundown farm into a thriving arable agricultural area once again. It's also the first game in the series to let you pick a female protagonist. ■

FACT

You can pick a cat or a dog as your pet, and it's not just cosmetic: cats stop wild dogs eating your chickens at night, while dogs stop moles tearing up your crops.

HATRIS

Year 1991
Publisher Bullet-Proof Software
Developer Bullet-Proof Software

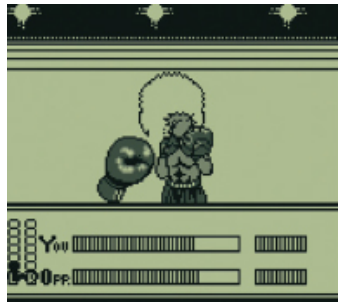
HOW DO YOU make lightning strike twice when you've already created the best puzzle game ever? Well… you don't. That's not to say Hatris, co-designed by Tetris creator Alexey Pajitnov, is a bad game by any means: it was always just going to be overshadowed by its iconic predecessor. The aim is to stack hats of different types – beanies, stetsons, sombreros, top hats, wizard hats, crowns and helmets – on top of each other. If you can stack five of the same hat they'll disappear, but adding to the complexity is the fact that the hats are all different heights, meaning a stack of top hats is obviously taller than a stack of crowns. The Game Boy version has a 2-player Link Cable versus mode. ■

FACT

In case you're wondering, you score a 'Hatris' when you clear two stacks at the same time with your two-hat block. It's worth double points.

HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING

Year Publisher Developer 1990 Activision TOSE



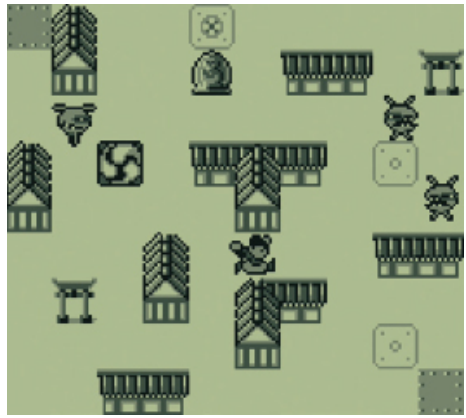
KNOWN SIMPLY AS Boxing in Japan, this is quite a detailed boxing game. There are six fighters to choose from, ranging from pros like The Champ and Mike Mauler to slightly less competent pugilists such as Lefty O'Hook and Johnny Jab. The aim is to beat the other five then defeat the boss character, The Hitman, to win the belt. The game is played from behind your boxer, and lets you choose which of three main punch types – a straight, an uppercut or a hook – will be your knockout punch (which can be used when your gloves flash). It also uses an interesting power system, in which each of your hands has a constantly moving power bar, meaning you have to time your punches to hit harder. ■

FACT

The Japanese version gives the boxers different names. The boxer called The Champ in the western version is named Mai Taison in Japan, so it's clear who he's supposed to be.

HEIANKYO ALIEN

Year 1990
Publisher Meldac
Developer Hyperware



HEIANKYO ALIEN BEGAN life as a 1980 arcade game in Japan which, under the name Digger, was tweaked and brought to the west by Sega. This Game Boy version marked the series' first appearance in the west under its original name, and is superior in every way. It has two modes: Old (a recreation of the arcade version) and New (a much more visually appealing remake). The goal is the same in each: it's a maze-based game where you're armed with a shovel and can dig holes. While avoiding the aliens on each stage you have to dig holes, hope an alien falls into one then fill the hole back up again to trap them. Trap every alien and it's on to the next stage. ■

FACT

The Super Famicom got a similar release in 1995, also with new and old versions of the game. It's generally agreed that the Game Boy version has more charm, however.

HERCULES

Year Publisher Developer 1997 THQ Tiertex

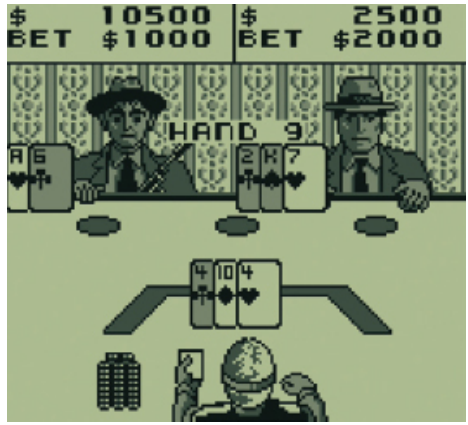
BASED ON THE 1997 Disney movie of the same name, Hercules has you playing as the man himself as he attempts to go from zero to hero and take his rightful place on Mount Olympus. The game consists of nine stages, most of which are side-scrolling platform sections. These are similar to Prince of Persia in that Hercules' animations mean that whether he's attacking enemies, jumping or basically doing anything his response time is extremely slow. These levels are broken up by a couple of flying stages where you zoom around on top of Pegasus and use the Sword of Fire to shoot flames at enemies. If played on a Super Game Boy, the entire soundtrack is replaced with an enhanced one using the SNES's audio chip. ■

FACT

James Woods plays the villain Hades in Hercules. He loved the role so much that when Hades appeared in Kingdom Hearts, Woods agreed to voice him.

HIGH STAKES GAMBLING

Year	1992
Publisher	Electro Brain
Developer	Sculptured Software



GAMBLING GAMES WERE ten a penny in the 8-bit and 16-bit era, but not many of them had actual plots. High Stakes Gambling is one of these rarities, putting you in the shoes and trenchcoat of Agent Pete Rossi, an undercover cop who has to ‘cripple the underworld’ by beating the five most notorious mobsters of all time in a series of gambling games. To beat each mobster you have to go headto- head with them for 10 rounds of blackjack, slots and video poker, with the winner getting the upper edge in the final game, draw poker. There’s also a ‘back alley bandit’ called Shady, who’ll help you out by selling you power-ups from his oversized coat. ■

FACT

The five mobsters you face are Machine Gun Max, Suitcase Sam, Hitman Harry, Lucky Louis and the ‘definitely not based on anyone’ Al Cologne.

HIT THE ICE

Year 1992
Publisher Taito
Developer Williams

TAITO'S 1990 ARCADE ice hockey game was ported to a number of systems, with the Game Boy version clearly being the one with the most sacrifices made to the arcade version's chunky cartoon graphics. You play as the Reds, who you put together yourself by choosing one of four goalies, and two of eight other players. You then face off against the Blues, Greens, Yellows and Blacks on your path to the championship (though on the Game Boy, of course, naming the teams after colours is entirely pointless). Much like the arcade version, rules are on the lenient side, with each player sporting their own special attack: Battleship Boyd, for example, kicks his opponents in the face, which can't be pleasant when he's wearing skates. ■

FACT

A prototype of an NES version of Hit the Ice leaked in 2020, containing a surprise 'Quest Mode' which played a bit like an RPG.

HOME ALONE

Year 1991
Publisher THQ
Developer Imagineering

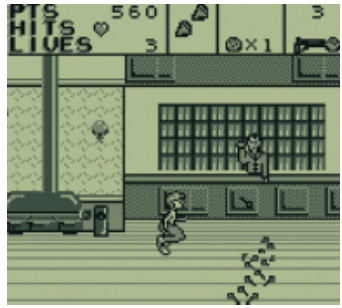
OF THE NUMEROUS (very different) Home Alone games released, the SNES one is arguably the most competent. Luckily for Game Boy owners, then, the Nintendo handheld got a port of the SNES game rather than the less accomplished NES one. As in the 16-bit version, players control Kevin McCallister as he runs around his house, collecting items and dumping them down laundry chutes so the Wet Bandits (and some other nondescript goons who are here this time for some reason) can't steal them. There are four stages, each requiring the player to collect a different type of item: valuables, toys, electronics and pets. At the end of each stage Kevin has to head down to the basement to collect the items and face off against a boss creature. ■

FACT

The game has a false ending: once you beat the Wet Bandits in the 'final' boss fight, you then get a secret final boss fight against a haunted furnace. Your basic water pistol beats it.

HOME ALONE 2: LOST IN NEW YORK

Year 1992
Publisher THQ
Developer Imagineering



UNLIKE THE FIRST Home Alone game, the game based on the sequel was similar on the NES, SNES and Game Boy, albeit with obvious graphical and audio differences between them all. Starting at the Plaza Hotel, Kevin has to make his way up to the 16th floor, get his dad's credit card, escape the hotel, make his way through Central Park, get to his uncle's townhouse, escape via the roof and run to the Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center, all while being attacked by the Sticky Bandits (and half of New York). Along the way Kevin can use various weapons, including a dart gun, a 'flying fist' gun and a necklace (which can be dropped on the floor and makes enemies slide off the screen). ■

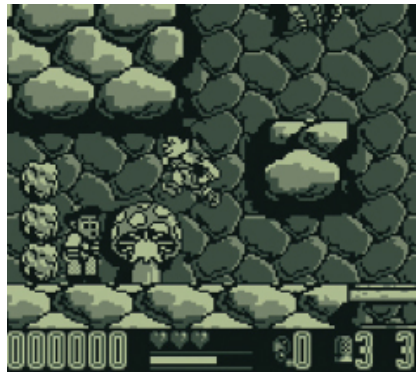
FACT

A Game Boy sequel called Home Alone 2: Kevin's Dream was planned for the Game Boy, but was cancelled. It was turned into a game based on the cartoon Bobby's World, but that was cancelled too.

HOOK

Year Publisher Developer

1992 Sony Imagesoft / Ocean
Painting by Numbers



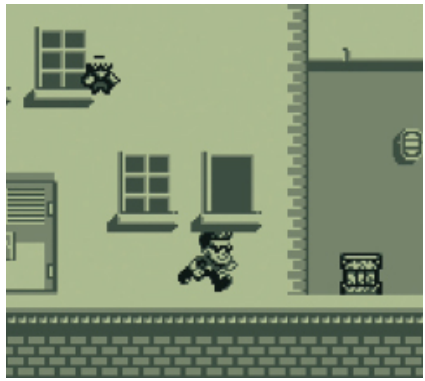
STEVEN SPIELBERG'S 1991 adventure movie about a grown-up Peter Pan returning to Neverland to rescue his children got a few different video game adaptations. The Game Boy version is very similar to the NES and C64 versions, and is your typical action platformer in which Peter has to take on Captain Hook's henchmen while collecting items. Peter can fly and swim, and can also collect thimbles which are used to summon Tinkerbell, who'll help take out some of your enemies on your behalf. The action is also split up with occasional flying sections (viewed from behind Peter) and one-onone fighting sections where Peter has a sword fight with Rufio, the new leader of the Lost Boys. As in the kids, not that vampire movie. ■

FACT

At one point in the movie, Tinkerbell drops some fairy dust on a bridge in London and a kissing couple start to float in the air. These are cameos by George Lucas and Carrie Fisher.

HUDSON HAWK

Year 1991
Publisher Sony Imagesoft
Developer Ocean



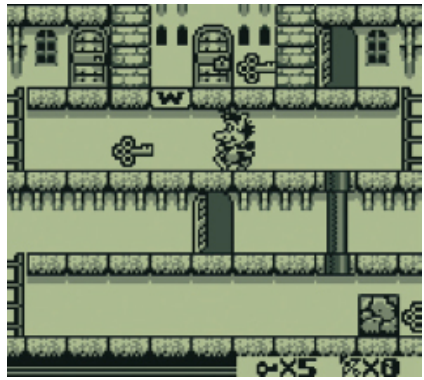
NOT EVERY FILM can be a box office hit like *Home Alone* or *Hook*: occasionally you'll get something like *Hudson Hawk*, an odd slapstick action movie that only grossed $17 million in the US and Canada. Still, nobody was to know this before release, which is why we got a video game adaptation. Playing as cat burglar-turned straight Eddie Hawkins – the Hudson Hawk himself – you have to steal two priceless Da Vinci works for a pair of crooks in order to rescue his kidnapped friends. The Hawk can attack enemies by throwing softballs at them, but they fly in an odd arc which means they often fly over their heads, an annoyance the manual tries to fix by suggesting you throw them before enemies even appear. ■

FACT

The game's high score table originally included the development team, but in the final version most were replaced by Japanese translators Chika Ohkubo and Junko Ishino.

HUGO

Year	*Publisher*	*Developer*
1995	Laguna	Kotobuki Systems



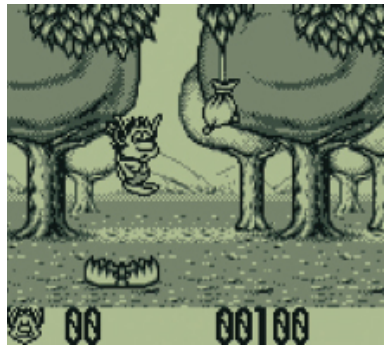
ANOTHER CONFUSING KEMCO rebranding of its Crazy Castle series (see Garfield Labyrinth, The Real Ghostbusters et al), Hugo is a Europe-only reskin of The Bugs Bunny Crazy Castle 2, which itself had already been reskinned in Europe as Mickey Mouse. Whereas the Bugs Bunny version has Bugs trying to rescue Honey Bunny from the evil Witch Hazel's castle and the Mickey Mouse version has Mickey trying to rescue Minnie, in this version Hugo is rescuing his wife Hugolina instead. She's been kidnapped by the Horned King, ruler of the castle Arbarus, so it's up to Hugo to explore the castle's 28 stages and collect all the keys hidden in each of them. Oddly, both Hugo and Mickey Mouse call the castle Arbarus. ■

FACT

Although Hugo uses the same passwords as the other versions, it replaces the vowels with other letters (A = G, E = C, I = F, O = B, U = D) so the password LOVE becomes LBVC.

HUGO 2

Year Publisher Developer 1997 Laguna Bit Managers



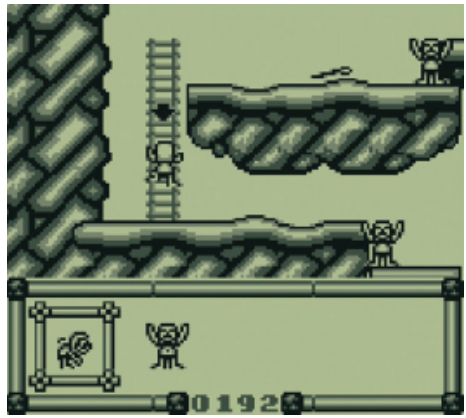
THE FIRST HUGO game on the Game Boy may have starred the titular character, but that wasn't really Hugo as fans knew him. Hugo was more famous for an interactive TV game show in which children would call in and press the keys on their telephone to move Hugo in a series of mini-games. These mini-games were released in compilations on PC and console, and Hugo 2 is one such compilation. There are five games here: dodging obstacles on a snowboard, dodging more obstacles while snorkelling, staying on falling pillars in an ice cave, dodging even more obstacles in a forest and a final stage in a witch's castle where you have to reach a locked door, study the keyhole and decide which key fits in it. ■

FACT

The Hugo phone-in game started in Denmark but nearly 60 countries adopted it. UK readers of a certain vintage may remember it on the Saturday morning kids' show *What's Up Doc*.

THE HUMANS

Year	1992
Publisher	GameTek
Developer	Imagitec Design



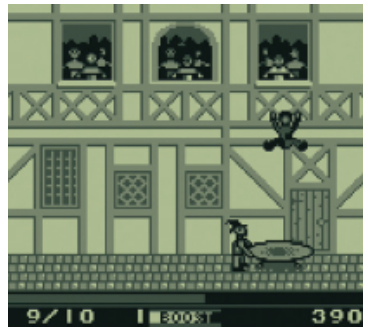
THE HUMANS IS what you'd get if Lemmings gave you actual control of its pint-sized characters. You have to get a group of Neanderthals from one part of each level to another, avoiding and navigating obstacles along the way. By pressing Select you can toggle between each Human and control them directly. At first the Humans can do little more than run and climb upwards, but along the way you'll find items which can be used to help them get around. A spear, for example, can be used as a makeshift pole vault to jump over gaps, and can then be thrown back over the gap so another Human can make use of it too. There are 28 stages in all. ■

FACT

If you want to get The Humans, try to track down the North American version instead of the European one, because the latter is missing cutscenes.

THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME: TOPSY TURVY GAMES

Year Publisher Developer 1997 THQ Tiertex



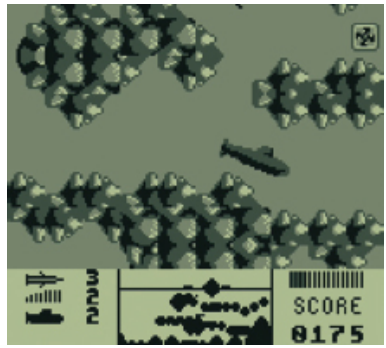
RATHER THAN THE typical 2D platformer you'd expect from a movie tie-in, this take on Disney's 1996 film instead offers five separate mini-games. Chiseler is like an upside-down Breakout where your bat is at the top of the screen and you have to use a ball to 'chisel' away a statue. Djali Bowling is a smaller 6-pin version of 10-pin bowling which replaces the ball with a goat. Catch the Fool is your typical 'use a trampoline to catch people falling off a building' fare. Upsy Daisy is a one-on-one battle where you're both floating above Paris, trying to burst each other's balloons. And there's also that mini-game staple, the sliding puzzle. ■

FACT

This is also on PC, where it's the second of Disney's 'Gamebreak' series of mini-game compilations. The first was Timon and Pumbaa's Jungle Games, which got a SNES port.

THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER

Year 1991
Publisher Hi Tech Expressions
Developer Beam Software



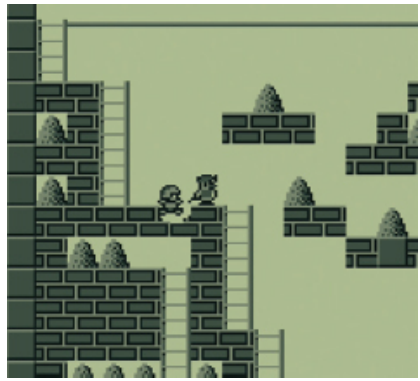
BASED ON THE 1990 film of the same name in which Sean Connery plays the first ever Soviet submarine captain with a strong Scottish accent, The Game Boy adaptation of The Hunt for Red October sees you controlling the *Red October* submarine itself as it navigates eight stages of enemythemed waters. As well as regular torpedoes you also have a limited number of homing missiles: these can be topped up by collecting power-ups but these can be destroyed so you don't want to be trying to pick them up during a battle. You can also activate 'Caterpillar Drive' for a limited time: this is a sort of stealth mode that lets you sneak up on enemies a bit easier. ■

FACT

When Tom Clancy released the original novel, Congress contacted the CIA and asked why the Russians had managed to invent the Caterpillar Drive before the US. It doesn't exist.

HYPER LODE RUNNER

Year Publisher Developer 1990 Bandai TOSE



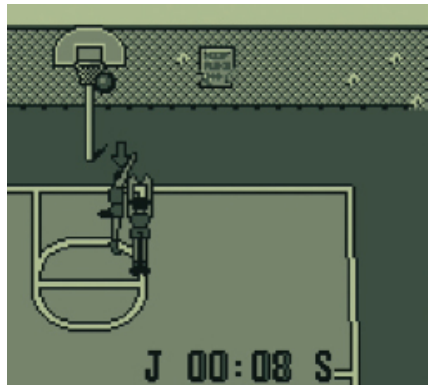
THE LODE RUNNER series started in 1983 and saw numerous sequels and spin-offs over the years. This Game Boy exclusive offers more of the same, but whereas most previous Lode Runner games on computer and console had single-screen stages, this one has scrolling levels (no doubt partly due to the Game Boy's reduced resolution). There are 50 stages in total and the aim is the same as in other games: collect all the gold in each stage armed only with a special shovelling tool. This tool lets you dig a hole immediately to your left or right, which serves two purposes: it lets you trap enemies in said holes, and it helps you get around the stages (though you have to be careful you don't trap yourself). ■

FACT

The Game Boy version has a bizarre plot about the year 2264 and political prisoners being trapped by the evil General Zod. No, not the one from Superman. A different General Zod.

IN YOUR FACE

Year Publisher Developer 1990 Jaleco Jaleco



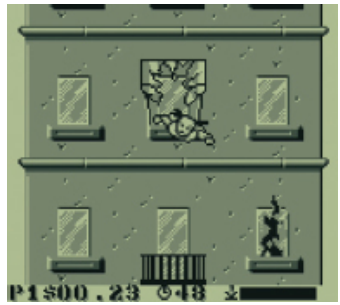
SEEMINGLY BASED ON Jaleco's 1988 NES game Hoops, In Your Face is a street basketball game that has solid enough controls but has a limited number of modes typical for the early days of Game Boy sports titles. Gameplay is your usual half-court battle with options for one-on-one or two-on-two, and you can play to 10, 15, 20 or 25 points or for one, five or 10 minutes. If you get close enough to the net before shooting the game will switch to a close-up cutscene where your player attempts a dunk. There are four players to choose from: Jones (who dunks well from the left side), Carr (who's better from the right), Small (who's good at stealing) and Pelle (who's fast). ■

FACT

The game's code contains an unused title screen with the name Basket Kids. It's not clear if this was the prototype title, or a planned title for a Japanese release that never happened.

THE INCREDIBLE CRASH TEST DUMMIES

Year 1992
Publisher LJN
Developer Software Creations



THE CRASH DUMMIES were a popular and mildly controversial toy line which some people accused of celebrating car crashes. Those who were able to get over it were met with two separate Crash Dummies games: most home consoles got a 2D platformer, whereas the Game Boy received this entirely separate game which is perhaps truer to the Crash Dummies ethos. Taking place over five days, you have to take part in a variety of dangerous jobs – jumping off a roof, crashing a car into a wall, testing a ski slope for safety, doing quality control at a munitions factory and testing out a new cruise missile. In each job you earn more money for hurting yourself, but don't overdo it because you can still explode and fail. ■

FACT

Despite (or maybe because of) the controversy, the Crash Dummies toy slogan was: 'Don't you be a dummy, buckle your safety belt and leave the crashing to us!'

INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE

Year Publisher Developer 1994 Ubisoft NMS Software

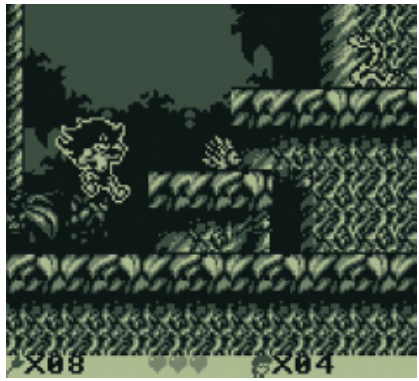
WHILE THE NES got two separate games based on *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, the Game Boy just got one: a port of the action platformer that was released on not only the NES but a host of other home computers and Sega consoles. The game retells the story of the movie via six stages: a cave in Utah in search of the Cross of Coronado, a circus train, the catacombs of Venice, Castle Brunwald, an airship and finally the Temple of the Sun where Indy must take on the Three Trials to find the Holy Grail. Regardless of what platform it's played on, the game is regarded as quite difficult, though punching and whipping bad guys is satisfying regardless.

FACT

At the end of the game you have to choose the right Holy Grail. As in the movie, the answer is the most humble-looking one, because Jesus would never have used something ornate.

UN INDIEN DANS LA VILLE

Year	1995
Publisher	Titus Software
Developer	Titus Software



THIS CRITICALLY PANNED French movie (the title translates to An Indian in the City) is about a commodities broker in Paris who wants to divorce his wife but finds that she's living with the indigenous people of French Guiana, and that he has a son called Mimi-Siku who he doesn't know about. Cue hijinks as said son is taken to the big city and finds himself in numerous fish out of water scenarios. The Game Boy tie-in – which was only released in France, naturally – is an action platformer where you play as Mimi-Siku. At first you start in the jungle, shooting snakes with a blowgun, but eventually make your way to the Eiffel Tower, the Parisian catacombs and even a little dinghy ride down the River Seine. ■

FACT

If the film's plot is familiar, that may be because Disney made a US remake called *Jungle 2 Jungle*, starring Tim Allen. It's just as bad, by all accounts.

INFOGENIUS PRODUCTIVITY PAK: BERLITZ FRENCH TRANSLATOR

Year 1991 *Publisher* GameTek *Developer* Imagineering

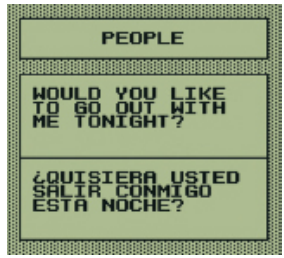
FLORIDA DEVELOPER GAMETEK set up its own Informational Software Division, which it used to create nongames (so just Tek, then). This included a suite of five Game Boy titles called InfoGenius Productivity Paks. One of these is a French Translator, which contains a dictionary of 12,000 words that you can translate from English to French and vice versa. It also includes 300 phrases, though while some of these may well pop up in conversation ('please take me to the airport') others seem a little less obvious ('I'm allergic to sulfa drugs'). You can also translate any number up to 9,999,999 into French. Neuf million, neuf cents quatre vingt dix neuf mille, neuf cents, quatre vingt dix neuf, if you're asking. ■

FACT

The cartridge also lets you convert dollars into French, Belgian or Swiss francs or Canadian dollars, which feels like the sort of thing that wouldn't really be accurate.

INFOGENIUS PRODUCTIVITY PAK: BERLITZ SPANISH TRANSLATOR

Year Publisher Developer 1991 GameTek Imagineering



IF YOU PREFER tapas to tarte tatin, then maybe GameTek's Spanish translation cartridge will appeal to you more than its French one. It's practically identical to the French cart, with the same phrases and the same dictionary, but with the obvious difference that now there are loads of upside-down question marks in there. This means the next time you go to Spain you can bust out any of the same 300 phrases as you see fit, from the always useful 'please check the fan belt' to the Peta-baiting 'where is the nearest furriers'. Oddly, though, it doesn't give you the Spanish for 'please forgive me for using a Game Boy, but Google Translate won't exist for another 15 years yet'. ■

FACT

GameTak had planned to continue the series with Italian, German and Japanese translator carts. Ultimately, the public's apparent 'nein danke' put an end to these plans.

INFOGENIUS PRODUCTIVITY PAK: FROMMER'S TRAVEL GUIDE

Year 1991
Publisher GameTek
Developer NovaLogic

FRENCH AND SPANISH translators are all well and good, but what if you're planning on travelling to the US, where such linguistic lexicography isn't necessary? Then you 'need' Frommer's Travel Guide, which gives you information on 15 different cities in the States from San Francisco to Santa Fe. Each city's section is basically an extremely cut-down version of a Yellow Pages, offering a handful of addresses and phone numbers for different hotels, restaurants, nightclubs, shops and the like. There's also a list of free 800-numbers, should you be looking for a courier service or trying to send a telegram. Look, it's quaint, but this was four years before Windows 95, let alone people having the internet on their phones.

FACT

The Frommer's series of travel guide books was launched in 1957 by Arthur Frommer and continues to this day. The Game Boy 'series' was launched in 1991 and ended in 1991.

INFOGENIUS PRODUCTIVITY PAK: PERSONAL ORGANIZER AND PHONE BOOK

Year 1991 *Publisher* GameTek *Developer* Imagineering

BACK IN THE ‘90s it was possible to buy little digital personal organisers, so GameTek decided it would muscle into that market too. Much like the other standalone handheld versions available, this gives you a little calendar and lets you create appointments. It’s also got a phone directory where you can store the names, addresses and numbers of all your most important clients / hated enemies. There’s a World Time option where you can see at a glance what time it is in Edinburg (sic) and it’s even got its own section of 800-numbers, which is different from that in the Frommer’s cart and includes some rather specialty businesses such as Kaufman and Sons Saddlery. ■

FACT

An early magazine ad showed an older version of the box art, in which it’s called Personal Organizer with Auto Dialer. It’s not clear how the auto dialling would have worked.

INFOGENIUS PRODUCTIVITY PAK: SPELL CHECKER AND CALCULATOR

Year 1991
Publisher GameTek
Developer Imagineering

IT'S PROBABLY NOT enormously unfair to suggest that none of the InfoGenius Productivity Paks are much use in the modern era given that our phones can do the job of all five of them at once and infinitely better, but even in 1991 the Spell Checker and Calculator had to have been considered a bit of a waste of time. Created with Houghton Mifflin's American Heritage Dictionary, it contains around 60,000 of the most commonly used words. If there's a word that you aren't sure you're spelling correctly, you enter it into the provided text prompt and the cartridge will either confirm that it's right or show similar words. The calculator, meanwhile, is a calculator. ■

FACT

If you want to see a writer trying to make something out of nearly nothing, *Nintendo Power* issue 26 somehow manages to dedicate five whole pages to the Productivity Pak series.

INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER

Year Publisher Developer 1998 Konami KCE Nagoya

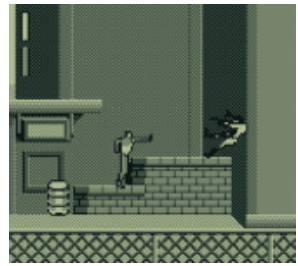
BY THE TIME 1998 had rolled around Konami's International Superstar Soccer had firmly established itself as the best football series around. This Game Boy offering was released around the same time as ISS 98 on the Nintendo 64, but it's obviously a completely different game to that. There are 36 teams to choose from, and players can take part in either a one-off Exhibition match, a penalty shootout or an International Cup mode, where you play through a small league of six teams, then another league of four teams, followed by knockout rounds. Although there are no official player licences the names are very close to the real thing, meaning England has the likes of Backham, Southgote and Seamon in the roster.

FACT

While the European version of the game has the same cover art as that of ISS 64, the North American version has the same cover art as its sequel ISS 98.

IRON MAN AND X-O MANOWAR IN HEAVY METAL

Year 1996
Publisher Acclaim
Developer Realtime Associates



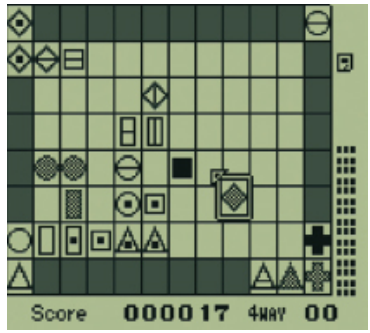
THIS COMIC BOOK crossover – which, let's face it, not many people asked for – teams up Marvel's iconic Iron Man with Valiant Comics' slightly less iconic X-O Manowar. And yes, it's a complete coincidence that Acclaim bought Valiant that same year for $65 million. Probably. Marvel villain Baron Zemo has teamed up with X-O's nemeses General Krytos and Mistress Crescendo in an attempt to steal the lost fragments of the Cosmic Cube and take over all parallel worlds and dimensions. Playing as either hero – they play similarly but have a couple of different moves – you have to fight through 21 action platformer stages taking in the likes of Stark Industries, Orb Industries and General Krytos's spaceship. ■

FACT

Acclaim's run of X-O Manowar comics only lasted for 21 issues. After Acclaim went bankrupt a new Valiant was founded, which revived X-O in 2012 and again in 2017.

ISHIDO: THE WAY OF STONES

Year 1990
Publisher Nexoft
Developer Nexoft



THIS PUZZLE GAME gives you a grid consisting of 96 spaces, and asks you to place 72 stones on them. The twist is that these stones come in different shapes and have different patterns on them, and you can only place a stone next to one with the same shape or pattern. This seems easy initially but by the time you reach the end you need to match with multiple stones to use some spaces. The game contains a few different modes: Solitaire is the main one, but there's also a Tournament mode – in which players take turns with the exact same tile order and try to get the highest score – and a Versus mode where you play on the same board and take turns placing stones. ■

FACT

While the Sega Genesis version of Ishido ties the game's roots to ninja lore, the Game Boy version tries to connect it to Stonehenge instead. You know, I'm starting to think it's all made up.

JACK NICKLAUS GOLF

Year 1992
Publisher Tradewest
Developer Sculptured Software

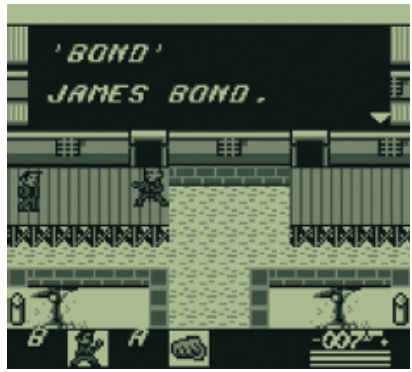
JACK NICKLAUS LOVES his golf, of that there can be no doubt. Not only was he one of the greatest golfers of all time, he's also considered one of the finest golf course designers. This Game Boy offering includes three of the real-life courses Nicklaus designed: the Castle Pines course in Colorado, Desert Mountain in Arizona and Muirfield Village in Ohio. Just to make sure the whole thing isn't a complete Nicklaus ego trip, there's also a fourth course called Jack's Greatest, which consists of his favourite 18 holes from around the world (such as the 8th hole at Pebble Beach). The game lets you play either Stroke Play for 1–4 players or Skins (playing for money) for 2–4 players. ■

FACT

When the 'Sculptured Software Presents' message on the title screen starts to go away, hold Start, Select and Left for a few seconds to get a dedication from a programmer to his late father.

JAMES BOND 007

Year 1998
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Saffire



GIVEN HOW SO many James Bond games focus on the action, you'd think some more of them would focus more on the plot instead. That's exactly what this Game Boy exclusive does, playing almost like a 007 version of an RPG. Agent 008 has gone missing so it's up to Bond to find them, but as is always the case he soon finds himself in the middle of a far more elaborate mission taking in the likes of China, London, Kurdistan, Marrakech, Tibet and the Sahara. While the main villain is the evil Russian General Golgov, along the way Bond clashes with old foes like Jaws and Oddjob. Gameplay is a combination of exploration and action, and while the combination proved divisive, it was certainly unique for the franchise. ■

FACT

There's loads of unused dialogue left in the game code, as well as an entire weapon – an enhanced missile launcher with guided missiles – which never appears in the final game.

JEEP JAMBOREE: OFF ROAD ADVENTURE

Year 1992
Publisher Virgin Interactive
Developer Gremlin Graphics

AS THE NAME suggests, this racing game has you driving Jeep Wranglers in a series of off-road races. The list of tracks is surprisingly sizable for a Game Boy game: there are three different championships you can choose to take on, containing a total of 20 tracks between them. The first race starts you off in 20th place, and your final position determines where you start in the next race (finish in 3rd, for example, and you'll start the next race in 18th). The game is played via a firstperson perspective, but it does give the impression that a Jeep is wider than a bus because if an opponent is visible anywhere on the road in front of you, you'll hit them when you try to overtake. ■

FACT

Jeep Jamborees are a real thing: they're official Jeep-endorsed off-road adventure weekends, the first of which took place in the Sierra Nevada Mountains in 1953.

JELLY BOY

Year Publisher Developer

1994 Ocean Probe Entertainment

JELLY BOY IS a platformer starring a cheeky pink chappy who was born in a sweet factory when a spark of lightning hit a vat of jelly. The factory's eccentric owner, Mr Swirley, has promised to reward one person with their dearest wish, but only if they can visit the factory's six worlds and collect a special item from each one. Much like its SNES equivalent, the Game Boy version of Jelly Boy makes the most of its protagonist's unique ability to morph his body and turn into different objects. By collecting special morph icons he can turn into the likes of a helicopter, a hammer or even a brick. And if all else fails he can always just make a massive fist punch out from his belly. ■

FACT

As well as the SNES and Game Boy versions, a Mega Drive version of Jelly Boy was set to be released. It was eventually cancelled, but a prototype version was later shared online.

JEOPARDY!

Year 1991
Publisher GameTek
Developer Data Design Interactive

THE NES GOT four separate games based on America's favourite game show and so too did the Game Boy, though the handheld titles have their own distinct art style. This first offering boasts 'over 1,500 questions' (though, of course, anyone who's seen the show knows that you're actually given the answer, and you have to ask the question). Categories include the likes of the American Revolution, Nuclear Physics and Gangster Movies, and given the game's early '90s release it's perhaps to be expected that many of the questions are based on 1980s trivia, so if you don't know who the Colorado senator who dropped out of the 1984 presidential race was, you might struggle at times. Gary Hart, if you're asking. ■

FACT

Here's a sample question from the game's Pop Music category: 'The Grammy-winning group that shares its name with Dorothy's dog.' Answer: 'What is Toto?'

JEOPARDY! PLATINUM EDITION

Year	1996
Publisher	GameTek
Developer	Data Design Interactive

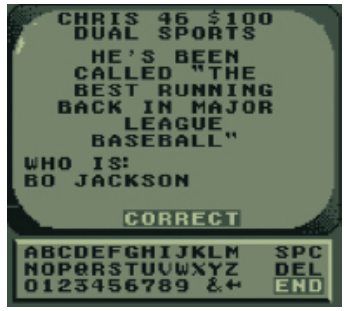
DESPITE THE FIVE years between the release of the first Game Boy Jeopardy! game and this Platinum Edition, the two are practically identical in terms of appearance and gameplay. The obvious difference is that all the questions have been changed, meaning there's an all-new batch of 1,500 to choose from. Well, I say new, but they've all apparently been 'taken directly from the archives of the show', so at least you know they're TV-standard. Categories this time include such heavy-hitters as Broadway Musicals, Russian History and Fashion Design, so you'd better have extensive general knowledge. The other big change is the addition of Super Game Boy support, which lets you play the game in colour. ■

FACT

A sample (outdated) question from the Money category: 'The florin is another name for this currency of the Netherlands.' Answer: 'What is the guilder?'

JEOPARDY! SPORTS EDITION

Year 1994
Publisher GameTek
Developer Data Design Interactive



IF YOU KNOW more about lacrosse than literature, this sports-only edition of Jeopardy! may be a match winner for you. Again, it's practically identical to the other Game Boy Jeopardy! games, right down to the 10 same selectable avatar characters. The main selling point, of course, is that every question – of which there are more than 1,700, according to the box – has a sports theme, with such categories as the 1992 Olympics, (American) Football Nicknames and Sports Movies. Naturally, some of the stat-based questions are now out of date: one question declares the Miami Dolphins' Dan Marino as the player with the most passing yards in a season, which was true at the time but has now (at the time of writing) been broken on nine separate occasions. ■

FACT

A sample question from the Logos category: 'This is the only NFL team without a logo on its helmet.' Answer: 'Who are the Cleveland Browns?'

JEOPARDY! TEEN TOURNAMENT

Year	1996
Publisher	GameTek
Developer	Data Design Interactive

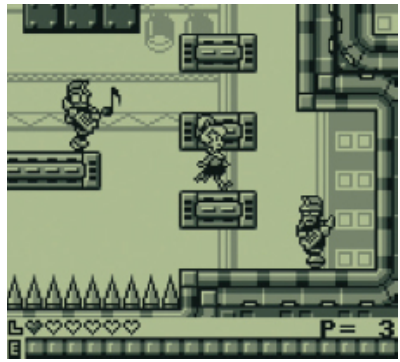
TRIVIA GAMES ARE all well and good, but what if you're some young buck (living in the mid '90s) who doesn't know any Shakespeare quotes and has no idea where the Chinese Communist Party was founded? Firstly, it was Shanghai, you fool. Secondly, this teenfocused version of Jeopardy! may be more suitable. Once again, it's basically the exact same game with different questions, but this time the 1,500 on offer are aimed at a younger audience. That means 'smell ya later' to such categories as Folk Music, English Literature and American Indians, and 'cowabunga, dude' (or something) to more youth-friendly subjects like Disney, Television and… um, American Indians. Because you're going to learn about Wounded Knee whether you like it or not. ■

FACT

A sample question from the Germany category: 'A very famous German product made from hops.' Answer: 'What is beer?' Steady on GameTek, these are kids.

THE JETSONS: ROBOT PANIC

Year 1992 *Publisher* Taito *Developer* Act Japan



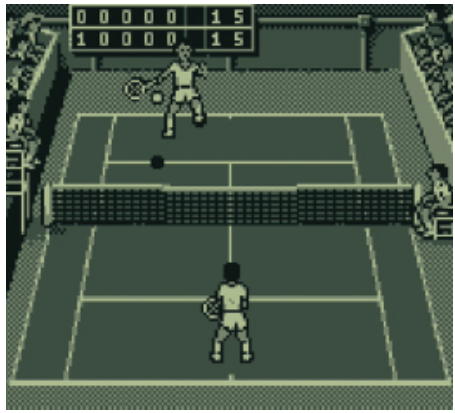
ORBIT CITY IS being overrun by robots! And given that there are robots all over the place in the world of The Jetsons, that's a lot of overrunning. It's up to not only George Jetson to 'stop this crazy thing', but his whole family too. Except the dog. The player can initially choose from three different levels, each starring a different Jetson. Elroy can throw balls at enemies, Judy has special boots that let her walk on spikes and Jane has a jetpack which lets her reach higher areas. Once all three stages are beaten, you play the final stage as George, who has access to all three abilities, before the final confrontation with Mr Cogswell, who's causing all the chaos. ■

FACT

The Jetsons have a robot maid called Rosie, but she doesn't appear in the game, which is a shame because it could have been fun to see Rosie going crazy and attacking George.

JIMMY CONNORS TENNIS

Year 1993 *Publisher* Ubisoft *Developer* NMS Software



THIS RATHER BASIC tennis game is very similar to the NES version, though it's missing one or two elements. As with its console sibling, you get to name your tennis player and then take them through a series of tournaments, starting at the Australian Open and ending at the US Open. Gameplay involves running to where you want to play your stroke, holding either the A button (for a normal shot) or the B button (for a lob) then letting go when the ball reaches you. You can only play on one type of court, so there are no 'grass, clay or hard' options here, and there's also no doubles play, though there is a practice mode with a ball machine. ■

FACT

The 15 tournaments in the game are presented in alphabetical order, so the US Open isn't the last one for any sort of prestigious reason, it's just because the Zhuhai Championships aren't in it.

JOE & MAC

Year 1993
Publisher Data East / Elite Systems
Developer MotiveTime

KNOWN IN EUROPE by the longer title Joe & Mac: Caveman Ninja, this is a cut-down port of Data East's 1991 action platformer. The story goes that a bunch of 'Neanderthal nerds' ransacked Joe and Mac's village in the middle of the night, and kidnapped its cave-women. It's up to Joe to make his way through nine stages, rescuing all the ladies and attacking any hostile cavemen or dinosaurs he encounters along the way. Joe is able to throw stone axes at his enemies but can also pick up other weapons like boomerangs, big stone wheels or even lightning bolts. Despite the title implying two-player co-op mode like there was in the arcade original, this is a strictly solo affair.

FACT

The game's manual gets around the lack of a twoplayer mode by saying Mac was 'last seen being chased by a Tyrannosaurus Rex' and is therefore nowhere to be found.

JORDAN VS BIRD: ONE ON ONE

Year 1992
Publisher Electronic Arts
Developer Imagineering

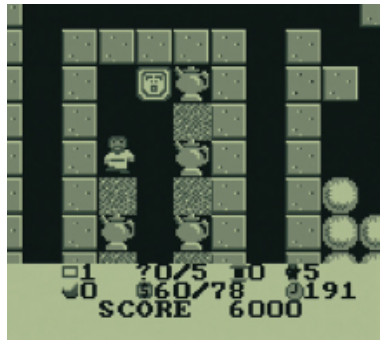
MICHAEL JORDAN AND Larry Bird had some of the most intensive duels in NBA history, which is why they were the natural choice to star in this one-on-one basketball game. Opting to play as either the Bulls' shooting guard or the Celtics' small forward, you then have to defeat the other in a game of one-on-one basketball. Somewhat unusual for this game is the use of two buttons to shoot: whereas almost every basketball game has you shooting by holding a button down then releasing it at the top of the jump, here you press one button to jump then another to throw. If one-on-one isn't your style there are also Slam Dunk Contest and 3-Point Contest modes, based on each player's specialities. ■

FACT

Despite their rivalry, both players deeply respect each other. Jordan said in 2022 that Bird is still 'far better' than any other small forward in history, including LeBron James.

JOSHUA & THE BATTLE OF JERICHO

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Wisdom Tree Wisdom Tree



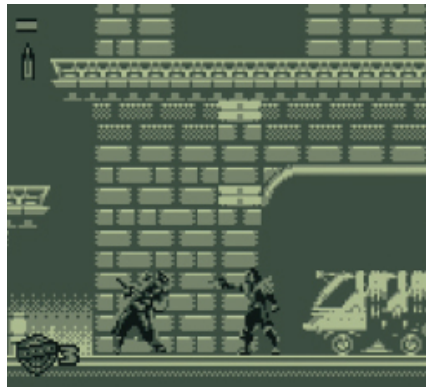
THIS IS THE sequel to Exodus: Journey to the Promised Land (found earlier in this book) and is another unlicensed Game Boy release by religious publisher Wisdom Tree. Although the first game starred Moses, he's now dead (spoilers) meaning it's now up to Joshua to cross the river Jordan and claim the land the Israelites were promised. He does this by making his way through 100 stages which are once again a rip-off of action game Boulderdash, only this time Joshua is armed with the 'Mighty Trumpet', which he uses to defeat his enemies. In the Bible the trumpet is supposed to mark the beginning of the collapse of the walls of Jericho, but in the game you just use it to defeat villagers with your 'toots'. ■

FACT

The game has around 250 Bible questions included, and you're given five at the end of each stage. For every question you get right you earn a Bible, 10 of which give you an extra life.

JUDGE DREDD

Year 1995
Publisher Acclaim
Developer Probe Entertainment



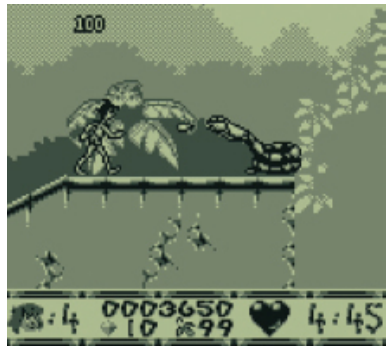
THE STREETS OF Mega- City One are in despair. Crime is so rampant that the law is now maintained by Judges, super-powered soldiers who dispatch justice on the spot. When Judge Dredd is framed after a news reporter is murdered with his bullets, Dredd sets out to clear his name, which – according to this Game Boy interpretation of the 1995 Sylvester Stallone film – means shooting a hell of a lot of bad guys. Dredd is initially armed with his Lawgiver handgun, but can also pick up more powerful weaponry, ranging from heat-seeking missiles to rubberbased ricochet shells: the latter don't do a lot of damage but can stun enemies on impact, making it easier to arrest them (which earns more points than simply killing them). ■

FACT

There were clashes behind the scenes while making the film, with Stallone demanding rewrites to make the film funnier while director Danny Cannon wanted it to stay dark like the comic.

THE JUNGLE BOOK

Year 1994
Publisher Virgin Interactive
Developer Eurocom



VIRGIN INTERACTIVE'S VIDEO game take on Disney's 1967 classic was released on no fewer than seven platforms in 1994, and while they all shared the same basic platforming concept they naturally all differed in various ways according to each system's capabilities. The Game Boy version most closely matches the NES one: both use a completely different sprite for the protagonist Mowgli, meaning the animation is a lot stiffer than that on Sega systems. There are 10 stages in total, each inhabited by hostile animals who can be disposed of by either jumping on their heads or throwing bananas at them. Naturally, 8-bit renditions of 'The Bare Necessities' and 'I Wanna Be Like You' are included: multiple versions of each, in fact.

FACT

2019's Disney Classic Games: Aladdin and The Lion King was a retro compilation containing every version of each tie-in. This was updated in 2021 to include every Jungle Book game, including the Game Boy one.

JUNGLE STRIKE

Year 1995
Publisher Malibu Games / Ocean
Developer Ocean

AFTER THE EVIL General Kilbaba was killed in Desert Strike, his son Ibn vowed revenge. Teaming up with the notorious South American drug lord Carlos Ortega, the two are now planning to build nuclear bombs, load them into trucks and plough them into the White House. As a lone special forces agent, you have to put an end to their scheme by carrying out nine campaigns: the first is in Washington DC itself but, as the title suggests, it's not long before you find yourself in the jungles of South America. While the Strike series' trademark helicopter is your main vehicle, some missions see you switching to a stealth fighter, an assault motorcycle and an attack hovercraft. Another impressively faithful Game Boy port. ■

FACT

The PC version of Jungle Strike has a comically awful FMV intro sequence. It's on YouTube and really has to be seen to be believed.

JURASSIC PARK

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Ocean Ocean

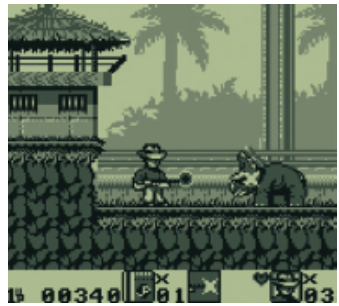
PRACTICALLY EVERY SYSTEM'S Jurassic Park game was entirely unique, but the one exception to this was the Game Boy and NES versions, which were essentially the same game. As in the NES game, you play as Dr Alan Grant as he tries to rescue the children Tim and Lex and escape the island, with the whole thing played from a topdown perspective. Across six stages you have to avoid a Triceratops stampede, survive a T-Rex attack, restore power to the park's computers, safely navigate a raptor nest, radio the mainland then get picked up by the chopper. Although it's identical to the NES game, it's slightly harder because the Game Boy's reduced resolution means you can't see so far ahead of you. ■

FACT

Instead of simple credits, the game ends with you wandering around a bonus area of the park where all the developers' names are displayed on large wooden signs.

JURASSIC PARK PART 2: THE CHAOS CONTINUES

Year 1994 *Publisher* Ocean *Developer* Ocean



WITH A MOVIE sequel to *Jurassic Park* still years away, Ocean took it upon itself to create its own, non-canon sequel. The Chaos Continues is set a year after the events of the first film, and sees Dr Grant (inexplicably) agreeing to return to the park to investigate the dinosaur installations. As luck would have it, a giant hurricane destroys the park's central headquarters and the dinosaurs are once again roaming free. To reach the helicopter that will escort him to safety, Grant must get through 15 dino-filled areas, some of which require him to collect a set number of keycards to open the exit. Rather than the top-down gameplay of the first game, this is a standard side-scrolling action platformer, but a solid one. ■

FACT

Both Game Boy games have one of the best ending messages in video game history: 'Brilliant. You have escaped Jurassic Park. You have succeeded where others become dinner.'

KEN GRIFFEY JR PRESENTS MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

Year 1997
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Software Creations

AS THE STAR player of the Nintendo-owned Seattle Mariners, Ken Griffey Jr appeared on the cover of a number of Nintendo-published console and handheld games. This Game Boy offering boasts both the MLB and MLBPA licences, meaning it not only has all the correct team names and logos, but all the correct player names as well. It's not an entire grand slam, however, because whereas the console versions have all the real ballparks too, the Game Boy version only has a single stadium. Regardless, there's still a healthy selection of modes on offer here, including a Home Run Derby, the All-Star Game and the option to play a 26-game, 78-game or full 162-game season. ■

FACT

The SNES version, released in 1994, didn't have real player names. This Game Boy release is actually the first Ken Griffey Jr game with both real player and team names.

KID DRACULA

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Konami Konami

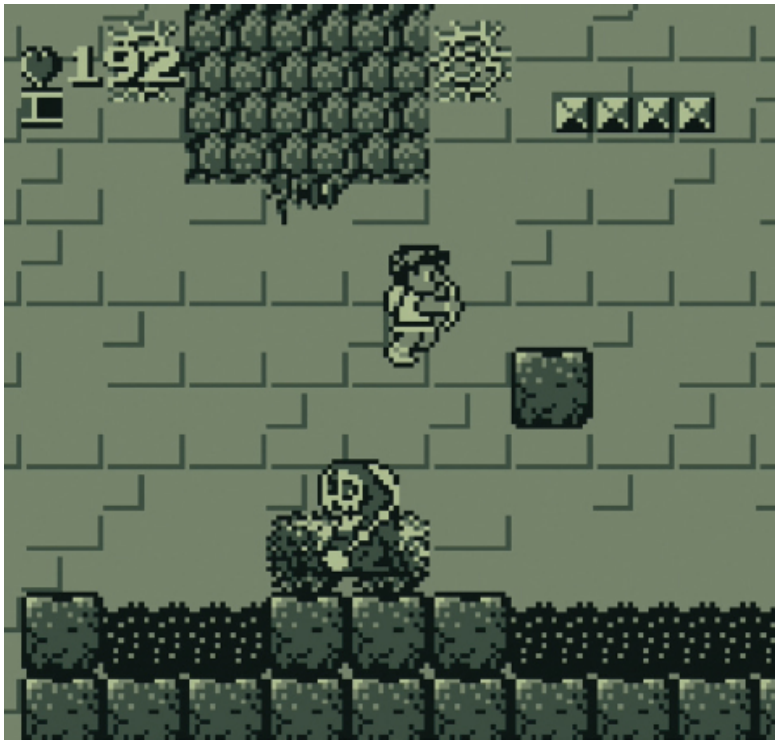
KID DRACULA ORIGINALLY appeared on the Famicom in Japan, and was followed by this Game Boy part-remake, partsequel. It's a parody of the Castlevania series in which you play as Dracula's son, as he tries to protect his castle from the demon lord Garamoth. Kid Dracula is able to perform various spells that give him special powers but, being the cheeky scamp that he is, the only one he can remember at the start of the game is how to turn into a bat and fly to hard-to-reach areas. As you defeat bosses you learn new tricks, such as the ability to throw bats at enemies, stick to the ceiling or use a haunted umbrella called Lugosi (named after Dracula actor Bela Lugosi) to block projectiles. ■

FACT

The original Famicom version of Kid Dracula was officially translated to English in 2019 and released as part of Konami's retro compilation Castlevania Anniversary Collection.

KID ICARUS: OF MYTHS AND MONSTERS

Year 1991
Publisher Nintendo
Developer TOSE



THE ORIGINAL KID Icarus on NES told the story of Pit, a young angel who has to fight his way upwards through the Underworld, Overworld and Skyworld, collecting three sacred treasures along the way to save Angel Land and rescue the goddess Palutena. What could the sequel possibly do after that? Turns out the answer is ‘the same thing’, because Of Myths and Monsters opens with Palutena having a nightmare which a soothsayer then tells her is a sign that Angel Land is about to be invaded. Pit, who’s now the leader of the Icarus Army, is sent on a quest to prepare for the invasion… by going back through the Underworld, Overworld and Skyworld and collecting the three sacred treasures. It’s not an entirely unique concept, then, and the action platforming mechanics aren’t a million miles away from those of the original game, but there are enough additions here to make Of Myths and Monsters a unique adventure in its own right (other than the stages being completely different). Most notably, while the screen mostly scrolls upwards again as it did in the original Kid Icarus, players are able to move back down again, as opposed to the NES game where falling off the

bottom of the screen would kill you. This makes it a much easier game to initially get to grips with, and as such any Smash Bros fans looking to find out more about Pit may want to play this first, over the NES game. ■

FACT

Despite being a Nintendo game, Of Myths and Monsters wasn't released in Japan, and only became available to buy there in 2012 when it came to the 3DS Virtual Console.

KILLER INSTINCT

Year 1995
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Rare

GIVEN THAT THE arcade version of Killer Instinct was designed to show what the N64 could be capable of, and the SNES version was a downgraded port of that, it stands to reason that the Game Boy version is pared back even further from the original vision. Due to the limitations of the hardware, the roster has been slightly reduced from ten fighters to eight (with the fiery Cinder and fighting dinosaur Riptor removed). The arcade version also had four attack buttons but the Game Boy only had two: this was solved by allowing players to perform weak attacks by tapping A or B, and strong ones by holding them. The result is a game that's clearly

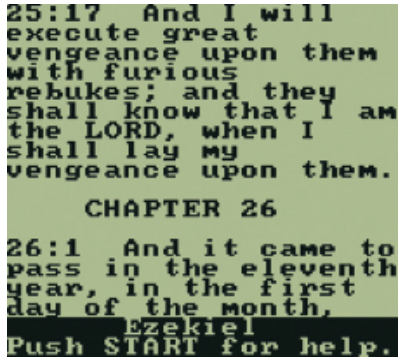
inferior to its siblings, but is still a competent Game Boy fighter. ■

FACT

2-player mode requires two copies of the game and two Game Boys, as is typical. If you're playing on the Super Game Boy, though, you can just plug in a second controller.

KING JAMES BIBLE

Year Publisher Developer 1994 Wisdom Tree Wisdom Tree



WHAT DO YOU do when you're going on a trip and you don't have enough space to pack both your Game Boy and your Bible? Luckily, unlicensed Christian game developer Wisdom Tree is on hand to save the day. As the name suggests, this cartridge contains the entire text of the King James Bible, and I'm talking both Old and New Testament so there's no corner-cutting here. There's a search function to help you find a specific passage, and there are two basic mini-games. Bible Word Match is a typical matching game where you turn over two things – in this case, words from the Bible – and hope they match. Bible Shepherd, meanwhile, is a take on Hangman in which losing results in sheep running away, rather than someone being hanged. ■

FACT

Wisdom Tree is so excited by the prospect of the entire Bible on a Game Boy cartridge that the manual calls it ‘a powerful new world of excitement’.

THE KING OF FIGHTERS ‘95

Year Publisher Developer 1997 Laguna / Nintendo SNK

SNK’S MUCH-LOVED KING of Fighters franchise saw a brief stint on the Game Boy, starting with this portable take on the second game in the series. Whereas the arcade game was a strictly team-based affair where players each formed a team of three fighters, the Game Boy version lets you choose between Team Play and Single Play, the latter offering more conventional oneon- one fights. This extra variety doesn’t extend to the roster: while there are 24 playable characters and two bosses in the arcade game, there are only initially 15 on the Game Boy. That said, if you hit Select a few times when the Takara logo appears at the start, you can unlock Nakoruru from Samurai Shodown, who’s exclusive to the Game Boy version.

FACT

Nakoruru didn't become a 'main' King of Fighters character until 2016, when she was added to the roster for The King of Fighters XIV.

THE KING OF FIGHTERS: HEAT OF BATTLE

Year 1998
Publisher Laguna
Developer SNK

THIS IS A port of The King of Fighters 96: given how long it took to reach Europe, it's perhaps understandable that the name was changed. The fighting engine is similar to that of the previous Game Boy game, and the same strengths and weaknesses are present, most notably the reduced roster. This time instead of the arcade version's 29 playable characters there are still only 15 available at first, meaning the likes of Benimaru, Joe Higashi and the huge ball-and-chain wielding Chang haven't made the cut. It does have another helping of exclusive secret characters, though, including evil 'Orochi' versions of Iori and Leona, and a playable appearance by Mr Karate, the enigmatic mask-wearing final boss from SNK's Art of Fighting. ■

FACT

Mr Karate is the alterego of King of Fighters regular Takuma. There's a

running joke that most fighters know who he is, but he keeps denying it and insisting everyone calls him Mr Karate.

KINGDOM CRUSADE

Year 1991
Publisher Electro Brain / Ocean
Developer Sculptured Software

KNOWN INSTEAD AS The Legend of Prince Valiant in Europe (and based on the cartoon of the same name), Kingdom Crusade is an interesting cross between a turnbased strategy game and a real-time action game. Playing as either the 'light' army or the 'dark' army – or, in the EU version, as either Prince Arthur's army or the ruthless conqueror Cynan's army – you have to defeat your opponent by either capturing their castles or defeating their armies. After being presented with a grid-based map of the kingdom, you choose a soldier and move them from square to square, with the action changing to a scrolling action-adventure game viewpoint each time you do. When you encounter an enemy you fight them in real time with your character's specific weapon and skills. ■

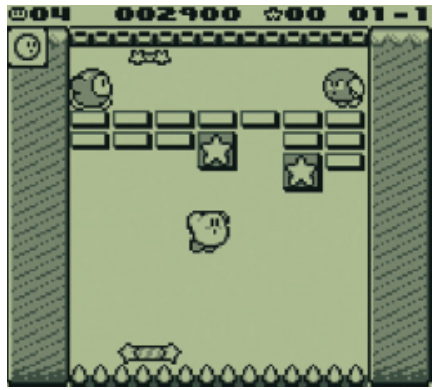
FACT

Both the NES and Game Boy Prince Valiant games were only released in Europe, so spare a thought for the North American fans of the

series. All of them.

KIRBY'S BLOCK BALL

Year 1995
Publisher Nintendo
Developer HAL Laboratory



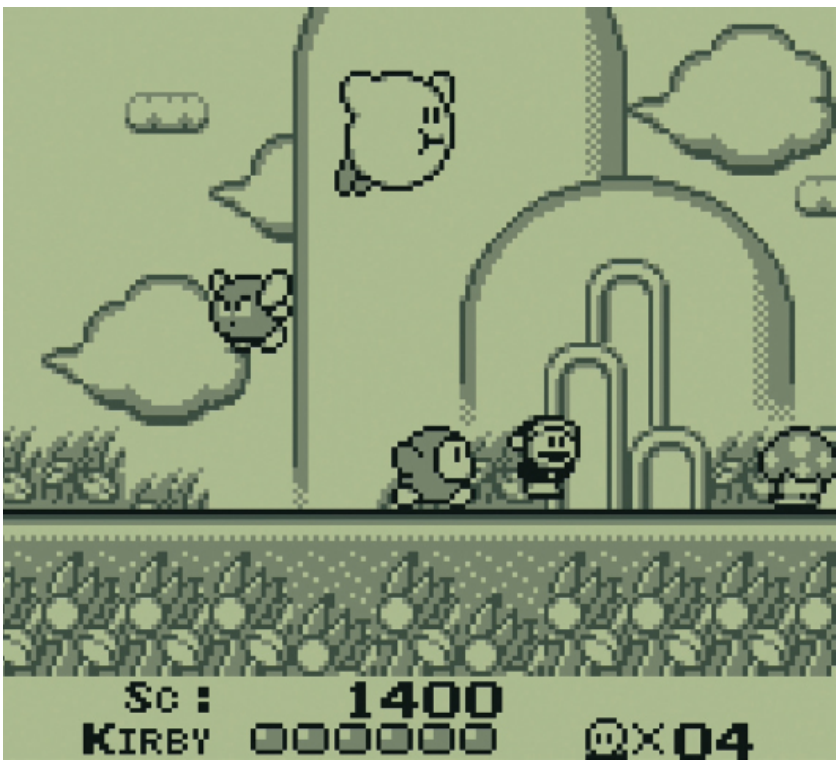
THE '80S DOWNPOUR of bat-and-ball Breakout imitators had slowed to a trickle by the mid- 90s but Kirby's Block Ball was one of the few attempts to bring something new to the genre. Naturally, Kirby is the ball, and the aim is to clear all the blocks in each stage by bashing him into them. The main twist is that by pressing the A button just as Kirby hits the bat it'll make him grow and give him extra power, letting you destroy some multi-hit blocks with a single hit. Power-ups are present but they take the form of the Copy Abilities from Kirby platformers: the Needle ability, for example, lets Kirby stick to the bat so you can manually aim him each time.

FACT

This was the last Game Boy game worked on by Gunpei Yokoi, the original designer of the Game Boy (as producer). Yokoi left Nintendo the following year and died the year after that.

KIRBY'S DREAM LAND

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Nintendo HAL Laboratory



SOME OF THE best creations happen by accident, and Kirby is the perfect proof of this. He was originally created by Masahiro Sakurai as a basic blob-shaped placeholder sprite until a more detailed character could be fleshed out, but Sakurai grew more attached to the blob over time and it was decided that this was his protagonist after all. Originally set to be called Twinkle Popo, he was renamed Kirby after Nintendo of America sent over a list of potential other names (John Kirby was the lawyer who helped Nintendo win a court case involving Universal and the Donkey Kong name). As his debut game, Kirby's Dream Land doesn't yet feature all the things

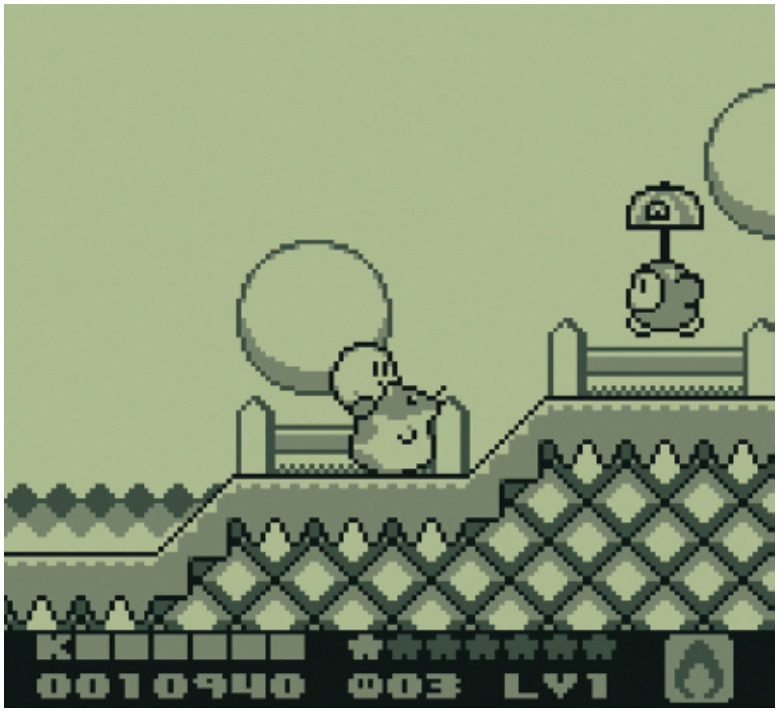
the pink puffball would become famous for – he isn't pink, for starters – but one key mechanic was already in place: the ability to inhale large objects. Kirby can use his vacuum-like mouth to trap most enemies and objects in his mouth, then either swallow them or shoot them back out as high-speed projectiles. By jumping and simply swallowing a big gulp of air instead, Kirby can also float in the sky indefinitely. The ability to fly for an infinite period of time meant that Kirby's Dream Land was an easy game to 'break', in that many of the game's hazards could simply be avoided. While some saw this as a negative, the flipside was (and still is) that Kirby's Dream Land is one of the best entry points to the platforming genre for younger players or those new to it. ■

FACT

Sakurai seemingly never told anyone that Kirby was pink (hence his white appearance on western box art). When the time came to create full-colour promo artwork, HAL staff were surprised.

KIRBY'S DREAM LAND 2

Year	1995
Publisher	Nintendo
Developer	HAL Laboratory



BY THE TIME Kirby returned to the Game Boy three years later he was a much more rounded character (pun always intended). The first Dream Land had been followed up by his NES debut in Kirby's Adventure, which introduced the iconic Copy Ability power that would go on to define the Kirby series. Dream Land 2 (which is therefore the third game in the series), also includes Copy Abilities, meaning certain enemies will now give Kirby a special power if he swallows them. Swallow the knight-like Sir Kibble enemy, for example, and Kirby will gain the Cutter ability which lets him throw dagger-like boomerangs. Dream Land 2 didn't just add the features that had been introduced in the NES game: it also introduced some tricks of its own, most notably the three animal friends. During Kirby's journey he'll come across three chunky animal chums he can ride for extra abilities. Rick the hamster can run across ice without sliding, Coo the owl lets Kirby fly and use his inhale ability at the same time, and Kine the fish lets Kirby inhale enemies while underwater. These animal chums can also be combined with Copy Abilities: climb aboard Rick while Kirby has the Burning ability, for example, and Rick will become the fireball-

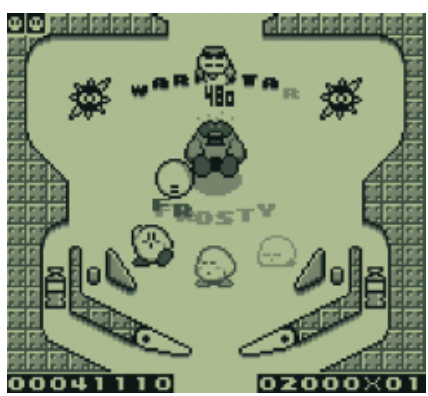
spitting hamster you never knew you needed. Newer Kirby fans looking to check out the character's early days may want to head straight for Dream Land 2, because the addition of Copy Abilities makes Kirby's second Game Boy outing a far more accurate representation of what the series would eventually become. ■

FACT

If you beat the game with a 100% save file, load it up and you'll gain access to a Sound Test mode. Track 'FGM 94' in this mode doesn't actually appear in the game.

KIRBY'S PINBALL LAND

Year 1993
Publisher Nintendo
Developer HAL Laboratory



KIRBY DEVELOPER HAL Laboratory had already dipped its toes in the pinball pool with the generally well-received Pinball: Revenge of the Gator, so when it later found success with a character who was literally shaped like a ball the next step was a no-brainer. Anyone who's played Revenge of the Gator will clearly see its influence in Kirby's Pinball Land, though the latter is certainly more involved. There are three separate tables here, each taking place

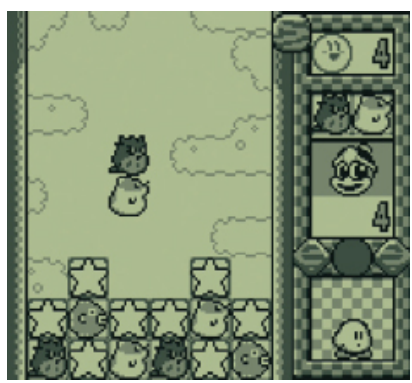
over multiple screens and each guarded by a Kirby boss at the top (Whispy Woods, Kracko and the Poppy Bros). The aim is to reach the top of each table and defeat its boss, but that's easier said than done because there are all manner of gizmos in your way. ■

FACT

DS game Kirby Mass Attack (aka Kirby: Squeak Squad) has a mini-game called Kirby Brawlball, which is a pinball game that plays a lot like the boss fights in Kirby's Pinball Land.

KIRBY'S STAR STACKER

Year 1997
Publisher Nintendo
Developer HAL Laboratory



WHEN YOU'VE ALREADY made a Breakout spin-off and a pinball spin-off, you may as well go the whole hog and chuck a puzzle game in there too. Hence Kirby's Star Stacker, a Tetris-style block-dropping puzzler adorned with Kirby characters. Players drop two-block shapes consisting mainly of Rick, Coo and Kine, the animal friends from Kirby's Dream Land 2. There are also Star Blocks, and the aim is to position these so that two or more matching friends are in between them: much like a burger where the Stars are the

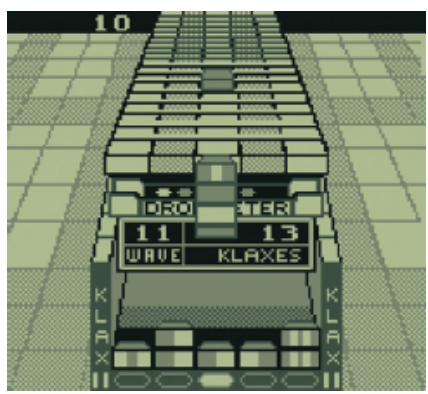
buns, essentially. This clears both the friends and the Star Blocks. As the game progresses it naturally speeds up, plus King Dedede occasionally punches the ground to make a new row of blocks appear at the bottom. ■

FACT

When you win a vs game in the Japanese version, rivers of joyful tears are seen flowing from Kirby's eyes. This was changed to a less over-the-top, happy Kirby for the western version.

KLAX

Year Publisher Developer 1991 Mindscape Eastridge Technology



ATARI'S ARCADE PUZZLE game was released on countless formats ranging from the humble Atari 2600 all the way up to the Mega Drive / Genesis. The Game Boy was also a recipient of a port, but it's at something of a disadvantage given that the whole point of the game is about matching coloured tiles. Players control a paddle at the bottom of a conveyor belt. As tiles drop off the belt, players have to catch them then drop them into a 5x5 well, in an attempt to match three of the same colour. Well, the same pattern, in the case

of the Game Boy version. While the core gameplay remains the same, the Game Boy's take on Klax is among the least satisfying given the compromises made. ■

FACT

The Japanese version of Klax on Game Boy is actually a completely different port by Hudson Soft. It ditches the 3D perspective for a completely flat well to make it easier to see.

KNIGHT QUEST

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Taito Lenar

AS FAR AS RPGs go, Knight Quest is about as straightforward as you can get. You play as a 14-year-old chap called Will who wants to be a knight. The king gives him a sword, armour and money and tells him that if he can defeat the Goblin King north of the town he can become a knight. So begins the first of four quests in this game, which follows conventional RPG mechanics for the most part. Will has four sword attacks named Swallow, Seagull, Falcon and Eagle, and each has varying degrees of strength or weakness against enemies. Everything else is by-thenumbers, quite literally at times: the upgraded swords and armour are simply named Sword2,

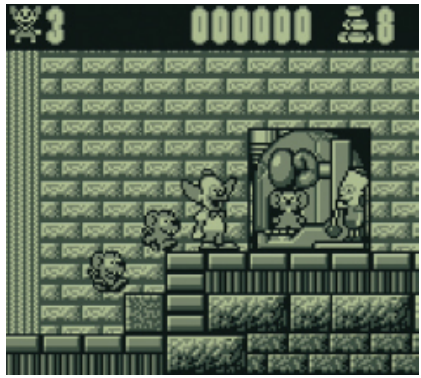
Sword3, Armor2, Armor3 and so on. ■

FACT

The game ends with the words: ‘Since then, Will has succeeded in another 100 adventures. I’ll talk about them next time.’ There was no next time, so where there’s a Will, there isn’t always a way.

KRUSTY’S FUN HOUSE

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Acclaim Audiogenic



ONE OF THOSE games that would probably struggle to get released today without some sort of hoo-hah over its subject matter, Krusty’s Fun House has you taking control of The Simpsons’ favourite clown as he attempts to get rid of a rat infestation at his Fun House. Rather than laying down traps or calling an exterminator, Krusty takes matters into his own hands and sets out to guide the rats towards his range of elaborate rat-killing machines, each operated by the likes of Bart, Homer and Krusty’s own sidekicks. The game is a platformer take on Lemmings, then, in which Krusty has to jump around and interact with various blocks and other obstacles to create a path for the constantly walking rats, with the reward being their grisly demise. ■

FACT

The manual takes pleasure in the fact that players will get the ‘chance to see a rat turned to goop in the neatest, grossest rat traps ever’. Alright, steady on mate.

KUNG FU MASTER

Year Publisher Developer 1991 Irem / Nintendo Irem

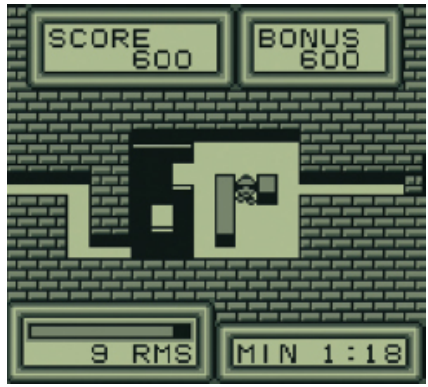
DESPITE SHARING THE same name as Irem’s 1984 arcade game (which itself was ported to the NES as Kung Fu), this is an entirely different adventure built around the same gameplay mechanics. Known as Spartan X in Japan and based on a Jackie Chan movie, the western version changes the characters and plot, and instead has you playing as – and this is serious – a ‘super agent’ called Bruce Leap. Bruce has to make his way through six stages, punching and kicking endless enemies and taking on such bosses as Chainsaw Freddy and Pugsly Ugsly, before his final showdown against Daddy Long Legs, the criminal mastermind who’s making ‘a lethal concoction of Scorpion Juice and petroleum […] with evil intent’. Look, I don’t know. ■

FACT

Just in case the idea of a kung fu expert called Bruce Leap wasn't silly enough, the game's box also reveals, for no reason at all, that he's a 'part-time camel racer'.

KWIRK

Year 1990
Publisher Acclaim / Nintendo
Developer Atlus



KWIRK IS A tomato with a green mohawk. He's cool, you see. One day, Kwirk and his girlfriend Tammy investigate a mysterious labyrinth underneath their city, but things go pear-shaped (well, tomato-shaped) when Tammy disappears. Kwirk has to get through the labyrinth's 30 rooms to find Tammy, but that's easier said than done because they're all filled with blocks which have to be moved out of the way to clear a path to the exit. It's a typical take on the Boxxle format where you push blocks around, though it does add some unique elements like turnstiles, holes to drop blocks into and Kwirk's friends Curly Carrot, Eddie Eggplant and Pete the Pepper, who help in some stages. There's also a Going Up mode where you play 100 random stages. ■

FACT

In the Japanese version, Puzzle Boy, the hero is a potato instead. This explains why Puzzle Boy 2 was known as A-Mazing Tater in the west.

LAMBORGHINI AMERICAN CHALLENGE

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Titus Software Titus Software

THIS RACING GAME is a port of Titus' home computer game Crazy Cars III with a Lamborghini licence added, which is surprising given that it centres around illegal street racing. Before each race, your competitors place a wager which you can choose to match: naturally, if you win you get to keep the purse. Some races also attract the attention of the cops, who'll try to ram you off the road. The money you win can be spent not only on increasing your top speed, but also on tools designed to help you. The radar, for example, lets you know when the police are ahead so you can reduce your speed and avoid triggering their traps, while the radar jammer blocks their speed traps altogether. ■

FACT

It can actually be a bad idea to upgrade your car too quickly in this

game, because your AI opponents will realise they have no chance of winning and will make low wagers.

LAST ACTION HERO

Year 1993
Publisher Sony Imagesoft
Developer Bits Studios

A RARE FLOP for Arnold Schwarzenegger – it ultimately made a loss of $26 million – *Last Action Hero* was nevertheless supported by a slew of video game tie-ins, with each system getting a different take on the movie. The Game Boy version naturally has you playing as Arnie's character Jack Slater, and tasks him with making his way through nine stages collecting all the ticket stubs he finds along the way. Only once you've found every stub are you able to complete a stage and move onto the next one. While most of the game is typical side-scrolling action fare, there are also two top-down driving sections: these still involve collecting stubs and also seemingly take place on the longest stretch of straight road in America. ■

FACT

Of the decision to release the film a week after *Jurassic Park*, director

John McTiernan once said: ‘To get to the depth of bad judgement involved in that, you’d need a snorkel.’

THE LAWNMOWER MAN

Year Publisher Developer 1993 The Sales Curve The Sales Curve

BASED ON THE bizarre sci-fi horror movie that annoyed Stephen King so much he sued to have his name removed from the title, the video game version of *The Lawnmower Man* is a similarly odd experience that very much attempts to be a jack of all trades. Playing as Pierce Brosnan’s character Dr Angelo, you have to put an end to The Shop, a secret agency overseeing a secret research facility that uses drugs and VR to increase intelligence to a dangerous level. The game is a combination of side-scrolling runand- gun action stages, driving sections and pseudo-3D flying and shooting sections that look similar to Sega’s Space Harrier. While the game itself didn’t exactly blow up, these 3D sections are at least a nice technical feat. ■

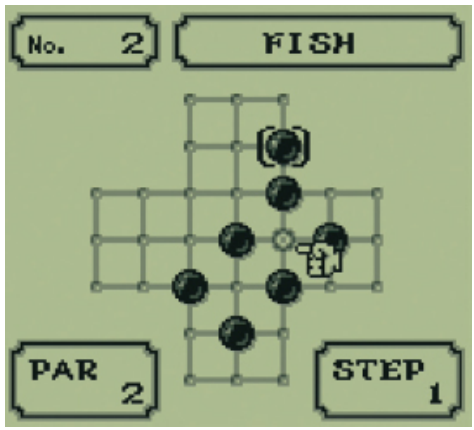
FACT

Be careful when you get to the end of the VR flight stages and see the

word ‘EXIT’. It’s actually an obstacle, and it’s possible to crash into it and die.

LAZLO’S LEAP

Year Publisher Developer 1992 DTMC Hect



THIS PUZZLE GAME is based on the solo board game Peg Solitaire, and is essentially just 100 levels of it with different layouts. Each level gives you a number of marbles on a board, and you can remove marbles by ‘leapfrogging’ over them with another one (as long as it has an empty space to land on). The aim is to remove every marble except for one, since the one you used for the final jump obviously can’t be cleared. What’s more, the final marble also has to land in the centre slot of the board. Strategy is therefore involved in not only making sure no marbles are stranded and unable to be cleared, but also that they’re cleared in a way that you end in the middle. ■

FACT

You may know Peg Solitaire as Brainvita: that’s the name it goes by in India, where it’s sold commercially.

LEGEND OF THE RIVER KING GB

Year Publisher Developer 1998 Natusme Tose

PART RPG, PART fishing game, Legend of the River King has you playing as a young lad who has to cure his sister of a rare disease. The poor lassie is dying, and the only known cure is the magical power of the Guardian Fish, a rare creature that can be found in a remote area. Luckily, your hero (you choose his name) is something of a fishing enthusiast, so without even stopping to brush his teeth he heads out, fishing rod in hand, to find the Guardian Fish and save his sister. The idea is to catch fish and sell them for supplies to help you on your quest: this being an RPG there are also monster battles, but these are basic timing-based affairs. ■

FACT

This is the fourth game in the River King series, known as Kawa no Nushi Tsuri in Japan, but the first to be released in the west.

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: LINK'S AWAKENING

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Nintendo Nintendo

THE FOURTH GAME in The Legend of Zelda series and the first to appear on handheld, Link's Awakening is also interesting in that it's only one of two main Zelda games (along with 3DS game Tri Force Heroes) that doesn't actually have Princess Zelda in it. That's because it's set not in Hyrule but in Koholint Island, a mysterious place that Link washes up on after his boat is caught in a storm. After befriending a girl called Marin then retrieving his sword and shield, Link is told by a talking owl that the only way to leave Koholint is to wake up the Wind Fish, a massive fish sleeping atop a giant egg on the island's largest mountain. It's up to Link, then, to collect the eight Instruments of the Sirens and use them to wake the Wind Fish and get home. Originally designed to be a port of SNES title A Link to the Past but eventually evolving into its own unique game, Link's Awakening is nonetheless similar in style to its 16-bit

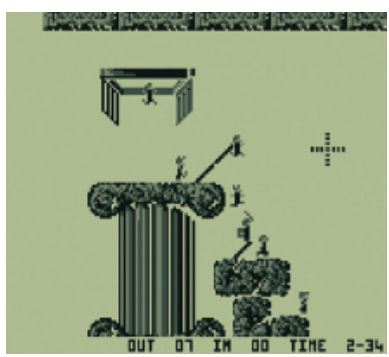
predecessor, in that it has the same combination of top-down gameplay and RPG-style dialogue with NPCs. The dream-like setting of Koholint Island allows the game to be a little stranger than other Zelda titles: numerous enemies from the Mario games make an appearance, as does a doppelganger of Dr Wright from the SNES SimCity. Ultimately, though, despite all the things it does differently, Link's Awakening still feels very much like a Zelda game at heart and still holds up extremely well all these decades later. ■

FACT

Zelda die-hards may be shouting 'Zelda isn't in Majora's Mask either', but she appears in one flashback cut-scene so I'm counting it.

LEMMINGS

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Ocean Ocean



BY THE TIME Lemmings arrived on the Game Boy it had already been ported to around 20 systems. As in every other version the game has you trying to guide a series of mindless Lemmings to an exit by assigning roles to them, allowing them to climb, float down large drops, build bridges, tunnel through walls and the like. The Game Boy version is a slightly cut-down port of the Amiga original, with only 100 stages rather than the full 120. It's also somewhat

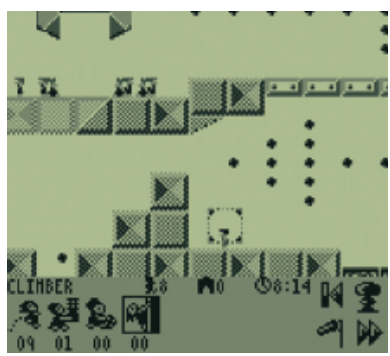
more sluggish because it bases its mechanics around background tiles rather than individual pixels, meaning there's sometimes a brief period between applying a skill and it being activated, something that can be problematic in a game where split-second decisions can be key. ■

FACT

Lemmings was so iconic (its success led to developer DMA Design creating Grand Theft Auto) that a statue of them climbing a pillar can be found in DMA's former home city of Dundee, Scotland.

LEMMINGS 2: THE TRIBES

Year Publisher Developer 1994 Psygnosis DMA Design



THE INEVITABLE SEQUEL to Lemmings builds on its predecessor by adding a wealth of new skills and splitting them into 12 different 'tribes', each with their own stage designs and music. Rather than being given a set number of Lemmings on each stage, this time you're given a single tribe of Lemmings and have to get them through all the stages: if one of them dies, they're gone for good and won't be in the next stage. The Game Boy port was handled by Lincoln-based studio Spidersoft (which would later become Rockstar Lincoln), which worked around the Game Boy's

limitations. Whereas the original Amiga version gives you 60 Lemmings per tribe, for example, the Game Boy one drops this to just eight, for performance and control reasons. ■

FACT

Spidersoft also made ports of Lemmings 2 for the Master System and Game Gear. These were never released but playable versions of them have since leaked online.

LETHAL WEAPON

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Ocean Eurocom

WHILE MOST FORMATS got an action platformer version of this Mel Gibson and Danny Glover film, the NES and Game Boy instead got a beat 'em up. They aren't identical – the Game Boy version is more zoomed in and its stages are different – but the general gameplay is the same. Players can switch between fisticuffs and guns with the Select button, and can swap between Riggs (Gibson) and Murtaugh (Glover) at any time by simply walking off-screen to the left. Each character has their own strengths and weaknesses: Riggs has a stronger jumping kick and can use knives, while Murtaugh has a stronger standing punch and can pick up heavy items like crates. Both seem incapable of hitting someone unless they're lined up perfectly in front of them, however. ■

FACT

There was seemingly a Lethal Weapon game in development for the Sega Master System. At the time of writing it's never been found, but in 2010 composer Jeroen Tel shared his full soundtrack for it.

LINGO

Year Publisher Developer 1994 Altron PCSL Software

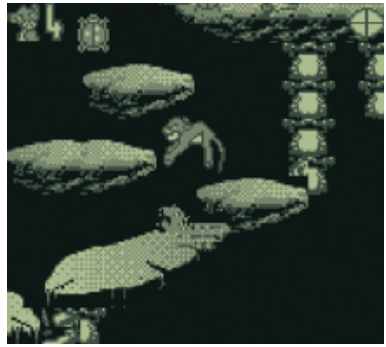
LONG BEFORE THE big Wordle craze, there was Lingo. This US game show started in 1987 before jumping over to Europe and enjoying great success there, including in Germany, which is where this Game Boy adaptation was released (there are options to play in English, German, French or Dutch). As in Wordle, you have to guess a five-letter word, and after each turn you're told if any of the letters were correct and if they're in the right position. If you fail to guess it in five turns, control passes over to the other contestant and they get to try. You can either play with two human players or against the CPU, but the latter has an annoying habit of letting the 30-second clock run down before making its guess. ■

FACT

The German TV version was called 5 Mal 5 (5 times 5), so the cover says both ‘Lingo’ and ‘5 Mal 5’ on it.

THE LION KING

Year Publisher Developer 1994 Virgin Interactive Dark Technologies



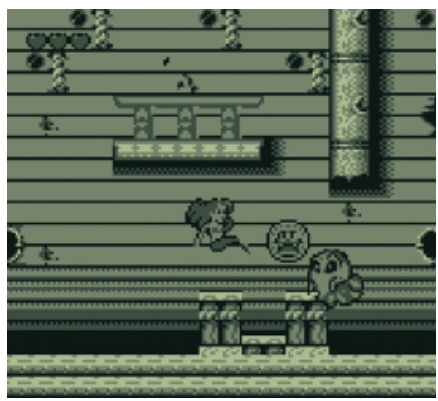
THE ENORMOUS SUCCESS of Virgin Interactive’s Aladdin platformer led to more of the same for The Lion King. As with the previous game, Disney’s animators were involved in creating the sprites and backgrounds, making the game (on 16-bit consoles, at least) look almost like you were playing the movie. Naturally, this Game Boy port is severely downscaled, meaning while some of the fluid animations from the SNES and Mega Drive versions are here in some form, the overall effect is greatly reduced. Of greater concern, however, was the way the game played, with many complaining that the Game Boy version in particular suffered greatly from awkward collision detection and frustrating, delayed jumping controls. It’s also missing the tricky Be Prepared level from the 16-bit versions. ■

FACT

The bible verse Luke 18:16 ('suffer little children to come unto me') is hidden in the game's code. One could argue that any kids who played this particular game did indeed suffer.

THE LITTLE MERMAID

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Capcom Capcom



THE GAME BOY'S Little Mermaid game is a far more faithful port than its Lion King one, but that's because the source material here is an NES game. As in its 8-bit sibling, the game is set after the events of the movie and sees Ariel opting to turn back into her mermaid form: partly because she has to save her friends from the evil sea witch Ursula, but partly because nobody's interested in playing a Little Mermaid game where Ariel has legs. There are five stages here – a coral reef, a sunken ship, an ice stage, an undersea volcano and Ursula's castle – and Ariel's main form of attack is trapping enemies in bubbles, then throwing those bubbles at other enemies.

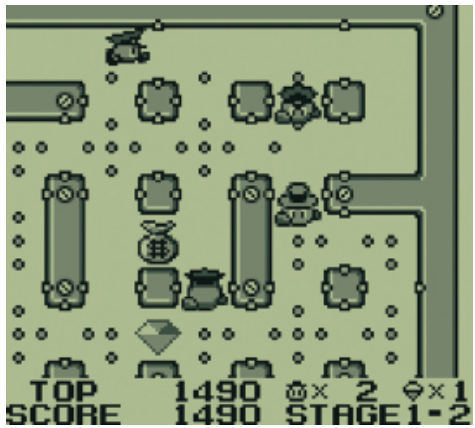
FACT

According to a 1995 article in the Northwest Florida Daily News, the game sold 500,000 copies on NES and Game Boy combined, and was

‘played almost exclusively by girls’.

LOCK ‘N’ CHASE

Year Publisher Developer 1990 Data East Data East



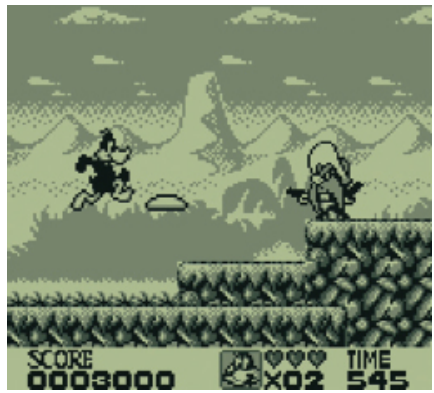
ORIGINALLY RELEASED IN arcades in 1981, Lock ‘n’ Chase was a fairly shameless Pac-Man clone in which Pac- Man and the ghosts were replaced by a robber and the police. It was completely overhauled for the Game Boy, meaning despite having the same name this may as well be the sequel. The aim is to collect every coin (i.e. Pac-Man dots) in all 18 stages, on your way to the final goal, the enormous African Star Diamond. The main thing that distinguishes Lock ‘n’ Chase from its far more popular dot-munching inspiration is the ability to drop barriers behind you, which block any police chasing after you. If you can trap one between two barriers, you get bonus points. ■

FACT

The game’s final stage introduces a new gameplay mechanic, where you have to push a giant key around the maze to unlock a door and collect the African Star Diamond.

LOONEY TUNES

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Sunsoft Sunsoft



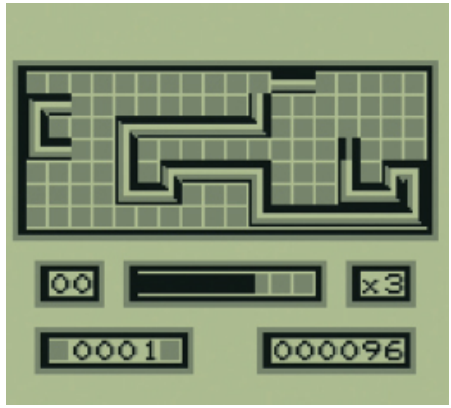
APPARENTLY, WHEN SOMEONE at Sunsoft asked 'which characters should we include in our Looney Tunes platformer?', someone replied 'yes'. Each of the game's seven stages has you playing as a different character, each with their own abilities. Daffy Duck can throw a boomerang-like Frisbee, Tweety can fly (while having to avoid Sylvester), Porky Pig has a shoot 'em up stage where he flies a plane, Taz has to eat as much food as he can in a minute, Speedy Gonzales can shoot stars, and Road Runner has an auto-scrolling level where Wile E. Coyote has to be avoided. Finally, Bugs Bunny appears in the last stage, where he has to take on all the previous bosses plus the final one, Elmer Fudd. ■

FACT

In Europe, Sunsoft released a 'sequel' called Looney Tunes 2: Tasmanian Devil in Island Chase. It's not a real sequel: you can find it later in this book by its US title, Taz- Mania.

LOOPZ

Year Publisher Developer 1991 Mindscape Argonaut Games



THIS PUZZLE GAME has a rather basic idea but can be quite compelling. The player is presented with a long 18x7 grid and is given a series of small pieces of pipe of various shapes. Some of these pieces are straight, some are corners, some are U-shaped or Z-shaped. The idea is to lay these pieces down, joining them together, to try to form complete loops. If you do this, the entire loop will disappear, freeing up space. The problem is, once a piece is laid down you can't place another on top of it, and if you can't place a piece within a short time limit you lose a life. It's a risk-reward situation, then, in that making massive loops gets you more points, but makes it harder to place spare pieces. ■

FACT

Capcom got the licence to make an arcade version of Loopz, but it never got beyond the prototype stage.

THE LOST WORLD: JURASSIC PARK

Year Publisher Developer 1997 THQ Torus Games

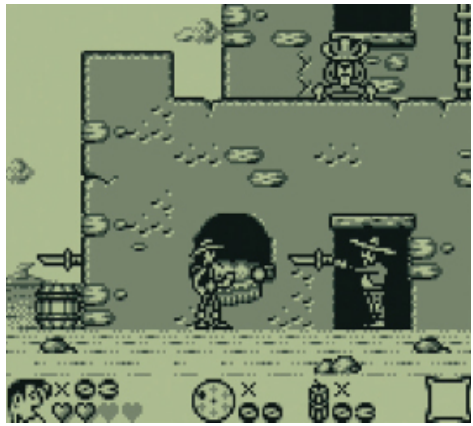
AFTER THE EVENTS of Jurassic Park, the company behind it, InGen, attempts to destroy all evidence of what happened. Some dinosaurs still remain in their second location, Isla Sorna, and a group of smugglers from a company called BioSyn (which features in Michael Crichton's book but not the film) have arrived there to steal and sell what's left. As an unnamed character working for InGen, you have to get to Isla Sorna, make your way through eight stages collecting eggs, DNA flasks and data disks, then escape the island on a boat so InGen can blow the place to smithereens. Naturally, along the way you'll fight various dinosaurs and BioSyn workers, made harder by the somewhat sluggish controls. ■

FACT

The game introduces a fictional enemy called the Lagoosh, a sloth-type thing that spits acid. If only it had a bunch of real dangerous creatures to choose from as potential enemies.

LUCKY LUKE

Year Publisher Developer 1996 Infogrames Bit Managers



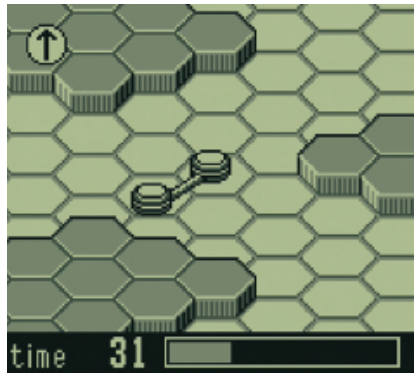
LUCKY LUKE IS a Belgian comic strip that started in 1946 and continues to this day, following the adventures of the titular gunslinger and his constant battles with the varmints of the Old West. A huge jailbreak means Jesse James, Billy the Kid, Pat Poker and the Dalton Brothers are all on the run, so Luke has to round them all up and send them back to jail to make sure the Wild West doesn't get any wilder. Cue a typical action platformer where Luke fights off baddies with his pistol and dynamite. There's also an over-theshoulder bonus game where Luke has to shoot a series of bottles, earning an extra life if he pulls it off. Its EU-only release makes it a bit of a hidden gem. ■

FACT

In real life, the Dalton Gang consisted of a bunch of outlaws, four of whom were brothers. Ironically, a fifth brother, Frank Dalton, was a Deputy US Marshal.

LUCLE

Year 1995
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Vic Tokai



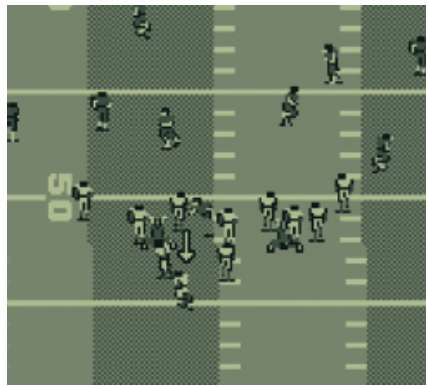
AS YOU'RE SEARCHING for signs of alien life in space, you check out a newly discovered planet called Hexlexon. As you enter it, your ship Lucle is drained of most of its powers, so in order to survive you have to navigate Hexlexon's 30 stages, passing through all 30 'Solar Energising Zones' (i.e. each stage's exit) to get enough power to leave. The twist (quite literally) is that Lucle is an oddly-designed little craft, which consists of two round cockpits joined together. By planting one of these cockpits on the ground and rotating it, the other cockpit can slide along the ground. The only way to move, then, is to alternate between cockpits, slowly twisting and wiggling around each stage while avoid the obstacles in the way. ■

FACT

The confusing title is actually a mistranslation of the Japanese title, Rukuru. 'Kuru' is a Japanese word that describes spinning (as in the GBA game Kuru Kuru Kururin).

MADDEN 95

Year Publisher Developer 1994 Malibu Games Halestorm



THE CONTINUED SUCCESS of the Madden NFL series led to EA deciding to expand and bring its 1995 edition to handhelds too. Whereas the Sega Game Gear version kept the NFL licence, however, the Game Boy version doesn't, meaning you don't have any of the real team names here (it's just Cleveland, Detroit and the like) and all the players are just represented by numbers rather than their names. Still, it does at least have a healthy selection of teams to choose from, licensed or not: as well as the 28 teams from the 1994 NFL season, there are also 12 'All-Time' versions of certain teams, a further 38 teams from previous seasons dating back to the 1970s, and two All-Madden teams. ■

FACT

The game's box claims to have '28 1995 teams' but the 1995 season included two new teams, the Jaguars and the Panthers, who aren't in here, meaning it's the 1994 line-up.

MADDEN 96

Year Publisher Developer 1995 Black Pearl Software Halestorm

THE GAME BOY version of Madden 96 is one of those rare examples of a sequel that's objectively worse than the game that came before it. In many ways it's the same game: the gameplay on the field is near-identical, the same Exhibition, Season and Playoffs modes are included and there are still no official licences, meaning all the compromises made in the '95 edition are here too. However, whereas Madden 96 adds the two expansion teams (the Jacksonville Jaguars and the Carolina Panthers), it removes the 50 classic teams that were in Madden 95, meaning the list of teams is about 40% the size of what it was the year before. As such, if you can buy either game, Madden 95 is recommended unless you're a big Jaguars or Panthers fan. ■

FACT

If you highlight the All- Madden team and press Right + Select + B, you'll unlock a Halestorm team, who are all fantastic. Do it again and you'll unlock a team called Da Funhouse, who are all awful.

MADDEN 97

Year Publisher Developer 1996 Black Pearl Software Tiertex

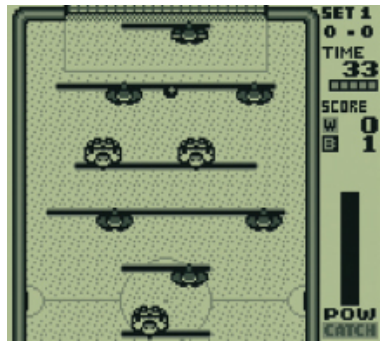
RATHER THAN REVAMPING the same game again and dumping it out as Madden 97, a brand new Tiertexdeveloped game was instead released as the Game Boy's Madden swansong. There are still no official team or player names, but the game is still based on the 1996 NFL season, meaning the glorious Cleveland Browns have been replaced by the Baltimore Ravens. The main issue critics and players had with Madden 97 was that, compared to the two games that came before it, this new version runs at a snail's pace and is extremely sluggish to play as a result. This means Madden 95 still ended up being arguably the best Madden title on the Game Boy, despite it having two successors. ■

FACT

After John Madden passed away at the end of 2021, EA announced that he would feature on the cover of Madden 23. The last time he was on the cover was back in Madden 2000.

MAGNETIC SOCCER

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Nintendo Nintendo



THERE HAVE BEEN plenty of football games released over the years, but you don't see many foosball games (or table football, if you'd rather). Magnetic Soccer is one such game, and on top of that it's one of the lesser-known Game Boy titles seemingly developed by Nintendo itself. As in the real-life equivalent, you don't control individual players here: instead, each row of players is connected together and you slide them left and right as a single unit, attempting to flick the ball forwards and into the opponent's goal. At some points it's possible to trap the ball and execute a power shot: if this hits an opposing player they'll fall over, meaning they can no longer defend for a while. There are also three table surface types – hard, ice and grass – which affect the ball's movement. ■

FACT

If you're looking for a (somewhat) more modern foosball game, FIFA 09 on the Wii included a Table Football mode where players twisted the Wii Remote to flip players around.

MALIBU BEACH VOLLEYBALL

Year Publisher Developer 1990 Activision Tose

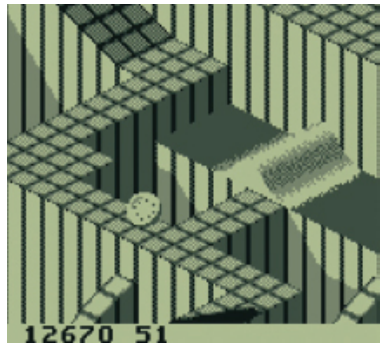
THIS RATHER SIMPLISTIC beach volleyball game lets you choose between men's and women's teams and features four nations, each of whom have varying degrees of ability. The Italian team is hopeless at everything, Japan can spike the ball hard, Brazil have fast runners and the USA team has maximum stats. You can choose either a single game with the first to 15 points winning, or a best-of-three affair. There's also the option to connect with a Link Cable and either play versus a friend, or have them team up alongside you for a co-op match against the CPU. An X is placed on the ground to show you where the ball is going to land, so much of the time you'll just be running to it and hitting A. ■

FACT

Beach volleyball debuted as an Olympic event in 1996. Two US men's teams won gold and silver, and two Brazil women's teams did the same, so at least the game is accurate.

MARBLE MADNESS

Year Publisher Developer 1991 Mindscape Eastridge Technology



THE VIDEO GAME equivalent of Tomy's Screwball Scramble toy, Marble Madness puts you in control of a marble and tasks you with guiding it around six progressively harder obstacle courses, reaching each exit before your timer runs out. As if the various hazards – including an evil marble, giant leeches, large vacuums and moving ramps – aren't tricky enough, the game's use of momentum means just controlling the marble is an exercise in skill, especially on narrower platforms. Players can choose between a 45-degree and 90-degree control system (the latter is recommended because it's like-for-like with the D-Pad) and there's also a two-player Link Cable mode where both players share the same stages and race to complete them first. ■

FACT

The game's designer Mark Cerny (who went on to become the PS5's lead designer) based the stages on the work of MC Escher. For youngsters not aware, he was a geometric artist, not a DJ.

MARIO'S PICROSS

Year Publisher Developer 1995 Nintendo Jupiter

THE FIRST IN what would become a long line of Picross games from Kyoto-based studio Jupiter, Mario's Picross is based on a logic puzzle known as a nonogram. The idea is that players have to fill in squares on a grid, using numerical clues on the rows and columns to figure out logically which ones have to be filled in and which ones must be left alone. If the clues are followed correctly and the right squares are filled in, the completed puzzle will make a picture. There are 192 puzzles in the game in total, and completing them all unlocks Time Trial: this is a harder mode where you can't ask for a hint at the start of a puzzle, and the game won't tell you if you've made a mistake. ■

FACT

A number of puzzles from the Japanese version were changed for the western one. These were mostly Japan-specific objects but also included a beer glass, a wine glass and a cocktail.

MARU'S MISSION

Year 1991
Publisher Jaleco
Developer Tose

THIS IS THE seventh game in the Ninja JaJaMaru-kun series of games, and the first to be released in the west. Maru's girlfriend Cora has been kidnapped, so he travels the world to defeat monsters and get information on her whereabouts. The six stages include Romania (where he fights Dracula), Greece (for a battle against Medusa) and Egypt (where you can fight Isis: not that one, the goddess). As you defeat smaller monsters you can collect their souls for more energy, and you can also find special weapons along the way. The game is a little on the odd side, especially because the jump button doesn't seem to have a limit, meaning you can hold it down and just float off the top of the screen. ■

FACT

In 2023 Maru's Mission got a colourised GBC version called Ninja JaJaMaru: The Great World Adventure. This version was included in a Ninja JaJaMaru compilation on PS4 and Switch.

MATTHIAS SAMMER SOCCER

Year Publisher Developer 1997 Laguna Jupiter

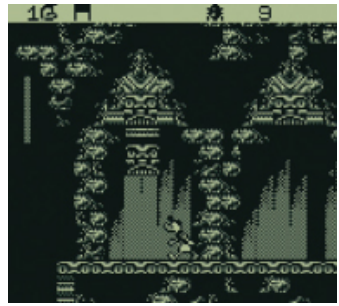
THIS GERMAN RELEASE stars Borussia Dortmund midfielder Matthias Sammer and is based solely on German club football. The game's main mode has you choosing one of the teams from the Bundesliga and taking on the rest in a full season, with a battery back-up to save your progress. Superstar mode, meanwhile, lets you create your dream team from all the best players in the league and use that team to try to win a cup tournament. When I say 'the best players', you'd better know them intimately: while the game does indeed use real player names, it only uses their first names instead of their surnames. Choose Bayern Munich, for example, and instead of Kahn, Matthaus and Klinsmann you'll have Oliver, Lothar and Jürgen. ■

FACT

Matthias Sammer was the European Footballer of the Year in 1996 and won the Champions League in 1997, so this was the best possible time to sign him up for a video game.

MAUI MALLARD IN COLD SHADOW

Year 1998
Publisher Sunsoft
Developer Bonsai Entertainment



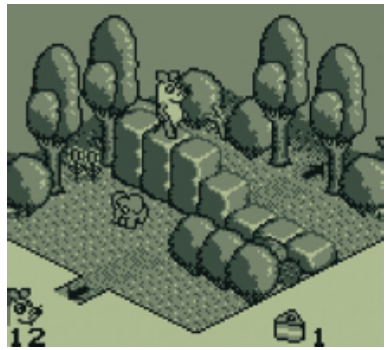
SOME HELPFUL ADVICE for game publishers: if you have one of the most famous characters of all time starring in your game, don't disguise them as a character nobody's heard of. Maui Mallard is actually Donald Duck, you see, but the North American release of this game makes no reference to him whatsoever. Maui is a part ducktective, part ninja (look, don't ask) who finds himself on a tropical island when a massive crime takes place. An ancient idol called Shabuhm Shabuhm has been stolen, so it's up to Maui to fight through seven stages of enemies to get it back for them. The game itself is a straightforward action platformer where Maui can transform into his ninja alter-ego (the titular Cold Shadow). ■

FACT

Unlike the 16-bit versions, the Game Boy version ends with the implication that Maui died during the last boss fight. Given that Maui Mallard never returned, let's go with it.

DIE MAUS

Year Publisher Developer 1997 Infogrames Bit Managers



THIS PUZZLE PLATFORMER is based on the long-running German TV show *Die Sendung mit der Maus* (which translates to The Show with the Mouse) and stars two of its main characters, the mouse and the elephant (they don't have names), as they search for their friend the bird. The game is played from an isometric perspective, similar to a number of European home computer games from the 80s, most notably Head Over Heels. As in that game, the player swaps between each character, using their different abilities to progress through each area. The mouse has a better jump than the elephant and is therefore better at navigating certain sections, but the elephant can push blocks around and break some obstacles with his trunk. ■

FACT

By entering a convoluted 25-button sequence when starting the game, then entering another code during the end credits, you unlock a dedication from programmer Isidro Gilabert to his partner Carol.

MAX

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Infogrames A-Wave

DESPITE THE COMPLETELY different name, this is a sequel to The Adventures of Star Saver: in Japan the games are called Rubble Saver and Rubble Saver II. In the sequel you play as Max, a young lad who sets out to free seven planets from the clutches of the evil Draco, who is remotely controlling hundreds of terrorising monsters. As in the previous games, Max has a little robot mech suit which provides him with a degree of armour: one hit pops the front off the mech, and a second destroys it, leaving Max running around on his own. As well as being able to shoot at enemies, Max can also use a 'telescopic sucker' to grab platforms directly above him. ■

FACT

Although in the west the box for the first game said the hero was called Kevin, the game still said 'Max' next to the number of lives. This may have been misinterpreted as the maximum number of lives.

MCDONALDLAND

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Ocean Visual Concepts

NOT TO BE confused with the NES game McDonaldland (also known as MC Kids in North America), this is a completely different platformer using the same characters. The premise is similar, mind you: Ronald McDonald's magic bag has been stolen, so it's up to Mick and Mack to head out and look for it. Although it's separate from the NES game it still shares many of its mechanics, so as you travel through its three worlds – Grimace's Forest, Birdie's Mountain and Ronald's Funhouse, expect a lot of lifting and throwing blocks. Despite its huge presence in the States, McDonaldland was never released in America… not in this form, at least. Check out Spot: The Cool Adventure later in this book. ■

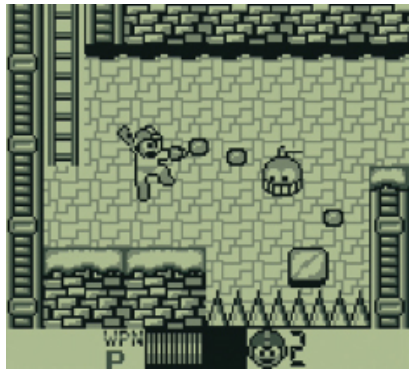
FACT

The game tries to make a mystery out of who's stolen Ronald's bag, while the back of the box flat out tells you it was the Hamburglar. You could have probably guessed that, to be fair.

MEGA MAN: DR WILY'S REVENGE

Year Publisher Developer

1991 Capcom / Nintendo
Minakuchi Engineering



AS A SERIES with six NES games to its name, it should be no surprise that Mega Man had a huge presence on Game Boy too. The first handheld release sees Dr Wily resurrecting eight of his old Robot Masters (the evil robots he uses to take over the world) in the hope that this time they can kill Mega Man once and for all. After taking out the first four – all of whom are from the first NES Mega Man – you get to Wily's fortress, where you take on the other four – all of whom are from Mega Man 2 – before facing off against a new foe, the 'Mega Man Killer' Enker. It plays a lot like the NES games but the zoomed in camera makes it harder. ■

FACT

The Japanese version is called Rockman World, and the western cartridge's data has an unused title screen that says Mega Man World, suggesting it was going to be called that at one point.

MEGA MAN II

Year 1992
Publisher Capcom / Nintendo
Developer Japan System House

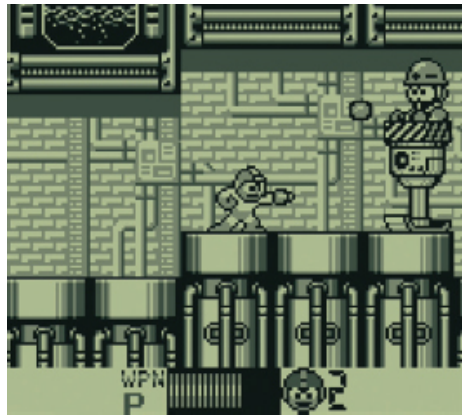
FOR THE MOST part, the second Mega Man on Game Boy follows a similar structure to the first game, with the player facing off against four Robot Masters from NES Mega Man 2, followed by another four from Mega Man 3 (although this time the latter four actually have full stages, rather than simply being boss fights as in the first game). This is also the first handheld Mega Man to add the hero's canine companion Rush, who acts as a makeshift spring or platform. Perhaps the oddest addition in this game is a new 'Mega Man Killer' called Quint, who's actually a version of Mega Man from a peaceful future: he was kidnapped by future Dr Wily, turned evil and sent back to the present day. ■

FACT

Mega Man co-designer Keiji Inafune said this is the Game Boy Mega Man he likes least, because the studio it was outsourced to wasn't familiar with the series.

MEGA MAN III

Year 1992
Publisher Capcom / Nintendo
Developer Minakuchi Engineering



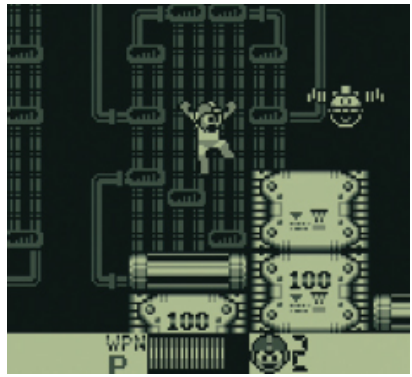
DR WILY HAS taken control of an oil platform and is using it to drill through the Earth's crust, so he can generate energy from its magma to fuel another giant robot. This is the perfect premise for another re-helping of Robot Masters from the NES series, this time consisting of four robots from Mega Man 3 followed by four from Mega Man 4. The main addition this time is the ability to hold down the B button to charge up your Mega Buster weapon and fire a more powerful shot. There are also appearances by Eddie, a little robot who was introduced in the NES Mega Man 4 and pops up every now and then to lend support by dropping off a recovery item. ■

FACT

The 'Mega Man Killer' robot in this game is called Punk. He has a big spiky mohican made out of a saw blade, which must be tricky to comb.

MEGA MAN IV

Year 1993
Publisher Capcom / Nintendo
Developer Minakuchi Engineering



AT THE ANNUAL World Robot Expo, scientists from all over the world gather to show their latest robots created for world peace. Dr Wily, thinking ‘what a load of wizz’, uses a radio signal to turn all the robots evil, and reactivates another eight of his old Robot Masters for good measure. This time, Mega Man takes on four Robot Masters from the NES Mega Man 4, followed by four from Mega Man 5. The main addition here is P Chips, a currency which is randomly dropped by enemies and can be given to Dr Light in exchange for 1-Ups or items. This is also the first Game Boy Mega Man with a Boss Rush section, where you take on all the Robot Masters again in one sequence. ■

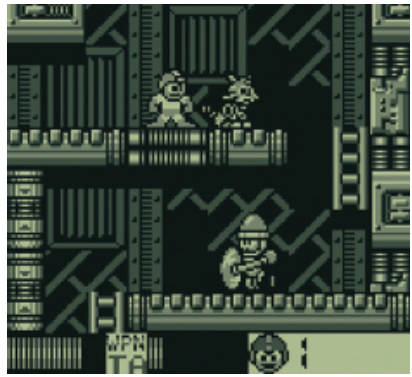
FACT

Hidden away in the game’s data is a screenshot of a Street Fighter II background. It appears that Minakuchi Engineering wanted to pitch a Game Boy port that didn’t happen (at least not from that studio).

MEGA MAN V

Year Publisher Developer

1994 Capcom / Nintendo
Minakuchi Engineering



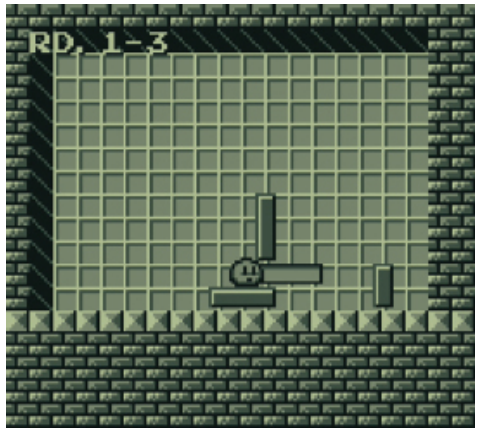
THE FINAL GAME Boy Mega Man game is also the only one to have completely new bosses, rather than repurposing NES ones. Rather than Dr Wily's Robot Masters, this time Mega Man is fighting the Stardroids, warrior robots from space named after the other eight planets (this was when Pluto still counted). The aim is to defeat them all, then face off against the Mega Man Killers from the previous four Mega Man games, before defeating Dr Wily again (because why not) then finally taking on the main boss, a powerful robot called Sunstar. Mega Man V is also a game aimed at cat-lovers, as robot dog Rush is replaced by a robo-kitty called Tango who helps him fight enemies. ■

FACT

Sunstar is called Sungod in Japan: this was changed in the west because Nintendo was iffy about religion in games. The Grab Buster weapon is also called the Snatch Buster in Japan, but let's not go there.

MEGALIT

Year 1992
Publisher Takara
Developer ASCII Corporation



AN EVIL WITCH decides she wants to take over the world, so she captures all the princesses from their castles and casts a spell on them. One hero attempts to save the day but the witch turns him into a little pebble character. As this pebble, you have to solve a series of puzzles which will change you back, free the princess and defeat the witch somehow. This unnecessary plot is just an excuse for a gravitybased puzzle game where you have to arrange stacks of stones so they're all sitting on the ground. Stones can be pushed and pulled, but any stones on top of them can only fall a certain height. If a stone breaks, you have to start the level all over again. ■

FACT

Megalit was designed by Shunsaku Kitamura and Takuya Maekawa, who both went on to work for Nintendo. Kitamura made development tools, while Maekawa created sound effects for Ocarina of Time.

MERCENARY FORCE

Year 1990
Publisher Meldac / Nintendo
Developer Lenar

MERCENARY FORCE IS an interesting take on the side-scrolling shoot 'em up genre, in that instead of controlling a spaceship you're controlling a group of up to four mercenaries. There are five types of mercenary – a servant, mystic, monk, ninja and samurai – each with their own type of shot. Since they're mercenaries, they have to be paid for, meaning the money you collect from fallen enemies can be spent on improving your team with the units you want. Your foursome can also be arranged into a number of formations, allowing you to change their position to suit certain scenarios. Each mercenary type also has their own unique 'spirit warrior' move, which is massively powerful but kills them, removing them from your group. ■

FACT

It appears that Mercenary Force was originally going to be a spinoff of the Ultima RPGs. A 1990 magazine article referred to a game called Ultima Shots, which was to be developed by Meldac.

METAL MASTERS

Year	1993
Publisher	Electro Brain
Developer	Bit Managers

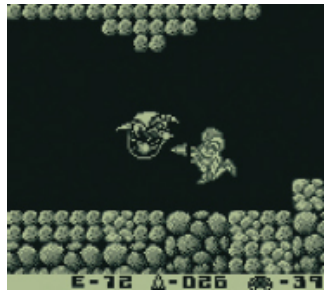
THIS ROBOT FIGHTING game was originally released on the Amiga and Atari ST in Europe in 1991, before getting a surprise Game Boy port for the North American market. The evil Baron wants to build the ultimate robot so it can do his nefarious deeds for him. In order to stop him, you have to fight and destroy the robots he had targeted, thereby destroying the parts he was going to use. Your robot is split into four parts: its body, its right arm, its left arm and its legs. Each part can be targeted and disabled during a fight, and while the body is the part that should be protected most (since its destruction will end the fight), losing your limbs can stop you moving or using weapons. ■

FACT

In 2021, Limited Run Games republished Metal Masters, making more physical copies available. These reproductions are out of print so they're a little on the pricey side now.

METROID II: RETURN OF SAMUS

Year 1991
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Nintendo



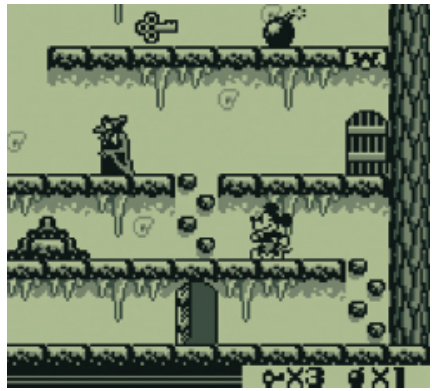
THE SEQUEL TO Nintendo's groundbreaking NES title Metroid sees Samus Aran travelling to planet SR388, the home of the Metroid species. The Galactic Federation had previously sent teams to the planet to exterminate the Metroids, but they all disappeared, so Samus is sent to find out what's going on. While Metroid II is similar to its predecessor in that players can explore the environment freely – hence the Metroidvania genre – the main aim here is to find and kill the 47 remaining Metroids on the planet, including the Queen Metroid (who's been laying Metroid eggs). Samus is aided on her mission by the Metroid Detector, a tool that indicates how many Metroids are left in the specific area Samus is in, and on the entire planet. ■

FACT

Samus' character designer Hiroji Kiyotake named Samus (wrongly) after football legend Pelé. He thought Pelé's real name was Samus Arantes, but it's actually Edson Arantes.

MICKEY MOUSE

Year 1992
Publisher Kemco
Developer Kotobuki Systems



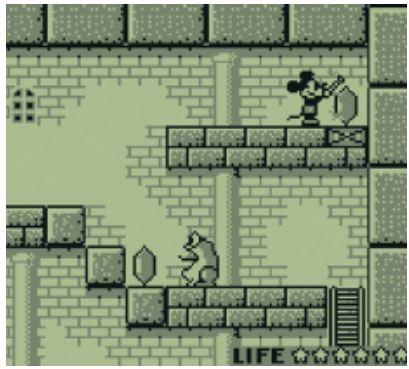
IF YOU'RE READING this book in alphabetical order, you've already read about this game twice. Mickey Mouse is the European version of The Bugs Bunny Crazy Castle 2, which would later be re-released as Hugo in certain parts of Europe. As such, the game is identical to those two, with the obvious difference that the Looney Tunes / Hugo characters have been replaced by Disney characters. Minnie has been kidnapped by the Horned King and taken to Castle Arbarus, so Mickey has to rescue her by getting through the castle's 28 stages, collecting all the keys in each so he can unlock their exit doors. Just to add to the naming confusion, in Japan this game is called Mickey Mouse II. ■

FACT

It's believed by some Disney fans that the Horned King in this game is the same villain from Disney's 1985 film The Black Cauldron, but he turns up again in the Hugo game so who knows.

MICKEY MOUSE: MAGIC WANDS!

Year	1998
Publisher	Nintendo
Developer	Kotobuki Systems



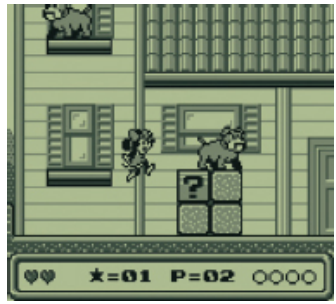
THIS IS THE sixth game in the Crazy Castle series, but the first one to actually feature Mickey Mouse in every region instead of slapping a bunch of different IPs on it. The plot follows Mickey and his friends as they stumble upon a haunted castle, where the evil witch Yashja lives. Their excitement wakes up the witch, who conjures up a massive hole. Mickey's pals all fall into the hole, so Mickey has to rescue them all. In each of the game's 40 stages, Mickey must use his magic wand to break every crystal, collecting the scraps of paper they drop to create pictures of his friends. The castle also has bosses, and beating them gives Mickey's wand new powers, like freezing. ■

FACT

Some of the pictures you put together get quite obscure: one stage, for example, has pictures of both Grandma Duck and Clarabelle Cow.

MICKEY'S DANGEROUS CHASE

Year 1991 *Publisher* Capcom *Developer* Now Production



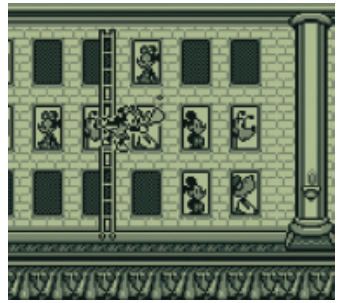
MICKEY'S BOUGHT A present for Minnie, because he's an absolute lad. However, Pete's stolen it, because he's an absolute sod. This relatively basic platformer has you setting out to get it back, and lets you play as either Mickey or Minnie (because, let's face it, Mickey's already messed up enough). Each plays identically, and each has the ability to pick up crates and throw them at enemies. Our heroes' adventure consists of 15 stages of running, jumping and enemydodging, taking in the likes of Mickey's hometown, the woods, a mountain and an industrial area, before you finally arrive at the business district and head up a tall building to face off against Pete and get the present back. ■

FACT

If you're curious to know what the present actually is, then (spoilers) it's a bird. Which probably shouldn't have been wrapped up in a box with a bow round it, in hindsight.

MICKEY'S ULTIMATE CHALLENGE

Year 1994
Publisher Hi Tech Expressions
Developer Designer Software



SOMETHING IS RUMBLING up in the clouds in the village of Beanwick. Mickey and Minnie want to climb its beanstalk to find out what it is (as if you can't guess), but before the villagers will let them, they have to prove their worth. Cue a bunch of mini-games! You have to arrange books alphabetically in Horace's library, dust paintings in Daisy's gallery, make your way through Donald's chess board challenge, guess which tools are in Goofy's tool box and jump on pumps in a certain order to get Huey, Dewey and Louie's drawbridge to rise. Completing each challenge gives you a magic bean and once you have all five you can head up the beanstalk and take on the giant (spoilers, I suppose). ■

FACT

Don't get too excited about the final confrontation with the giant: it's that most irritating of all minigames, the sliding picture puzzle.

MICRO MACHINES

Year 1995
Publisher Ocean
Developer Mindscape

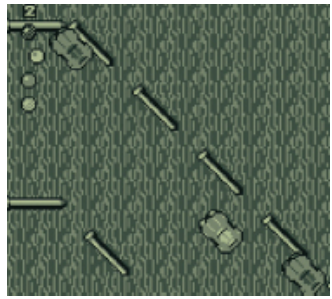
THE NES VERSION of this quirky top-down racing game may have been unlicensed, but by the time it came to Game Boy, some kissing and making up had taken place, allowing for a legit release. As in other versions, you race a series of extremely tiny toy cars across real-life environments like a bathtub, a school desk and a breakfast table. If you only have one copy of the game and you're the type who doesn't mind getting intimately close to the person you're playing with, the game also has a special two-player mode that uses a single Game Boy and has each car auto-accelerating, with one player using the D-Pad to steer and the other using the A and B buttons. ■

FACT

More than 1,000 Micro Machines toy cars were released over the years. Some of these were based on other IPs, with the most popular being the mini Star Trek and Star Wars vehicles.

MICRO MACHINES 2: TURBO TOURNAMENT

Year 1996
Publisher Ocean
Developer Codemasters



THE SEQUEL TO Micro Machines is more of the same, offering 12 new vehicles to drive (with new additions including helicopters and powerboats) and a total of 37 tracks to play through, taking in the likes of a workbench in a shed, a pool table and a picnic on the beach. The main addition here is the titular tournament option, in which up to eight players can take part in a knockout tournament. There's also a new single-player league mode, where you get promoted and relegated in different divisions after four-race series. That extremely close quarters two-player Game Boy share option is back in there too, so if you haven't already gotten engaged after playing the first game you can have another crack at it. ■

FACT

Micro Machines 2 originally had car handling that was very different to that of the first game, until Codemasters' David Darling asked for it to feel more like its predecessor.

MIGHTY MORPHIN POWER RANGERS

Year 1994
Publisher Bandai
Developer Tom Create

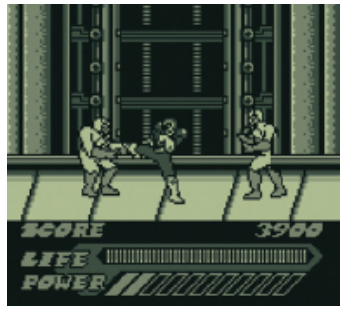
THE EVIL RITA Repulsa has sent some of her favourite enemies down to Earth to generally wreck the joint, so it's up to the Power Rangers to give them a hefty kick in the monster-rump and send them on their way. This action game consists of five stages: downtown Angel Grove, a quarry, a factory, a cave and Rita's Moon Palace. Each is split into two sections: at first you'll play through a side-scrolling section where you fight waves of Putty enemies, then you'll summon the Megazord for a one-on-one fight against that stage's boss, be it Squatt, King Sphinx, Baboo, Goldar or Rita herself. You can choose between any of the five Power Rangers, though they don't really play any differently.

FACT

Because the colour of each Power Ranger is pretty important, if you play the game on Super Game Boy it'll change the colour palette of the backgrounds to match the Ranger you've chosen.

MIGHTY MORPHIN POWER RANGERS: THE MOVIE

Year 1995
Publisher Bandai
Developer Tom Create



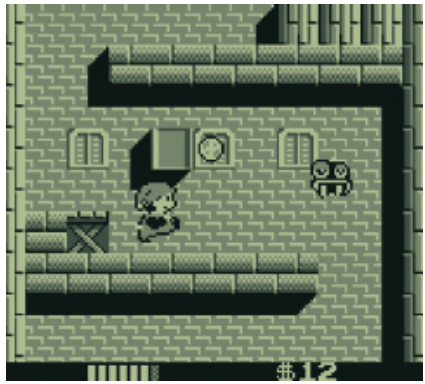
THE GAME BOY'S second Power Rangers game was based on the film and is another side-scrolling action game similar to its predecessor, but without the Megazord bits. This time you get to choose which order you want to take on the first five stages, which each end with a different Power Rangers villain: Mordant, Queen Tenga, Giant Rat, Goldar and Lord Zedd. Once you beat all five stages, you'll unlock the final sixth one in which you take on the movie's villain, the Freddy Krueger-like Ivan Ooze. The other main difference here is that you don't start each stage as a Power Ranger right away: you start as a Ninja Ranger and can transform into your Power Ranger suit once you build up enough power. ■

FACT

The movie (released in 1995) was the first Power Rangers production to have 100% new material, rather than reusing fight scenes from Japan's Super Sentai series like the TV show did.

MILON'S SECRET CASTLE

Year 1993
Publisher Hudson Soft
Developer Make Software



WHILE PLENTY OF Game Boy games are ports of NES titles, very few of them can claim to be better than their source material. That's a claim Milon's Secret Castle can realistically make, given that it adds extra music, has a longer ending and is a tad less annoying to play. The rest remains the same, including the plot: Milon is a young lad who has to rescue Queen Eliza from the evil Warlord by travelling through Castle Garland and using his magical bubble wand (which can be fired slightly upwards or slightly downwards, but not straight ahead). The wand can not only defeat enemies but also reveal hidden items and routes: it's their hidden nature that has given the game a reputation for being frustrating. ■

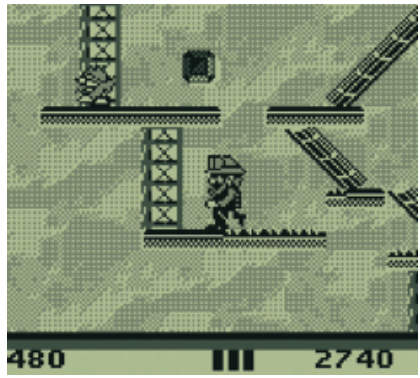
FACT

The NES version ends with a single screen saying 'see you again'. The Game Boy version adds nice big artwork of Milon and Queen Eliza having a wee hug, followed by proper credits.

MINER 2049ER

Year Publisher Developer

1992 Mindscape Eastridge Technology



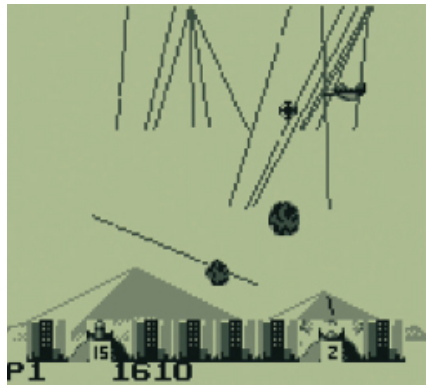
ORIGINALLY RELEASED ON Atari 8-bit computers in 1982, Miner 2049er took clear inspiration from Donkey Kong and Pac-Man. This Game Boy version attempts a visual upgrade, but one of its major gameplay mechanics doesn't quite carry over in the transition. Playing as a miner called Bounty Bob, you have to explore 10 stages, each full of enemies and power-up items. And when I say 'explore', I mean it: the only way to clear a stage is to run over every single platform in its entirety, covering every inch of the floor. In other versions this would involve turning the floor a different colour, but on Game Boy the barely noticeable difference, combined with the zoomed-in screen, makes it much harder to see what's left to be covered. ■

FACT

In an interview with *Retro Gamer* magazine in 2007, Miner 2049er programmer Bill Hogue said the Game Boy version was 'a really poor sales performer'.

MISSILE COMMAND

Year	1992
Publisher	Accolade
Developer	The Code Monkeys



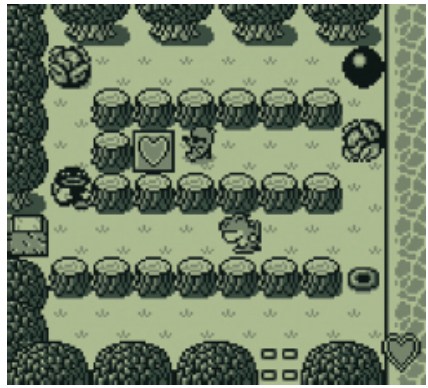
BASED ON THE 1980 Atari arcade game, Missile Command has you defending a series of cities from an onslaught of enormous missiles (can you tell it was released during the Cold War?). This Game Boy port actually names the cities, meaning you're defending Cairo, New York, London, Sydney, Paris and Moscow from attack, with each stage not only multiplying the number of points you can earn, but also adding different variations. By the time you reach Moscow, for example, you only have one building left to defend and you're also dealing with jets and UFOs. If you want it, try to buy the Arcade Classic 1 compilation instead: not only does it include Asteroids too, it also adds Super Game Boy support for each game.

FACT

The original arcade version was supposed to have city names, with each being a city in California, but the idea was eventually dropped.

MOLE MANIA

Year Publisher Developer 1997 Nintendo Pax Softnica



THIS PUZZLE GAME (produced by a chap by the name of Shigeru Miyamoto, no less) has you playing as Muddy, a mole who receives a note from the evil farmer Jinbe saying he's kidnapped Muddy's wife Maggie and their seven kids. The aim, then, is to get through seven mazes – each consisting of a series of grid-based stages – to rescue each child, before taking on Jinbe to get Maggie back. Each stage has two layers: an overground layer, and an underground layer, which can be seen when Muddy burrows into the earth. Certain parts of the stage can only be accessed by tunnelling underneath them. Each stage also has a large black ball: to beat each stage, you have to hit the ball off the exit. ■

FACT

Developer Pax Softnica was considered a second-party developer and was often contracted to make games for Nintendo.

MONOPOLY

Year Publisher Developer

1991 Parker Brothers / Konami Sculptured Software

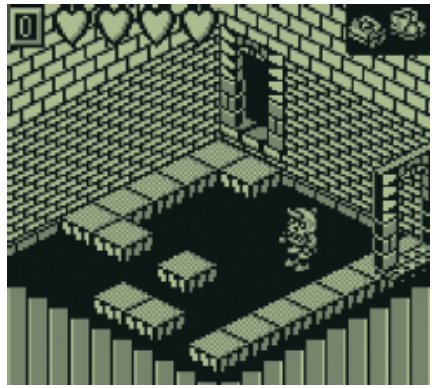
MONOPOLY IS ONE of those board games that can take hours to get through, so the idea of a version that can be played during long car trips must have been a godsend for parents. The Game Boy version can be played by up to four players, all of which can be humancontrolled if you want (you simply pass the Game Boy to the next player when it's their turn). If you don't have enough to make up the numbers or you're playing on your own, you can also choose from eight CPU opponents, each of whom has their own backstory. If you don't fancy a full-length game of Monopoly, there are also eight preset scenarios which assign players properties from the start. ■

FACT

CPU opponents include 'self-made millionaire' Arthur, banker's widow Gertrude, tycoon's daughter Maude, dodgy hustler Erwin and Atlantic City prom queen Penelope.

MONSTER MAX

Year Publisher Developer 1994 Titus Software Rare



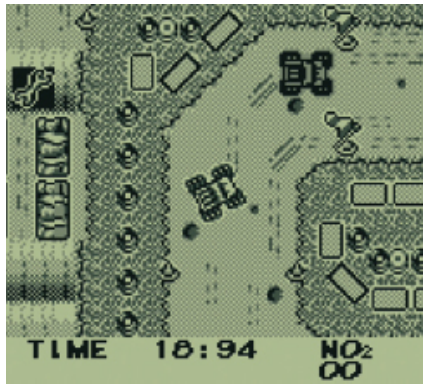
MONSTER MAX WAS designed and programmed by the dream team of Jon Ritman and Bernie Drummond. The pair had previously mastered the art of isometric platformers on home computers, including the classics Batman and Head Over Heels, and Monster Max is very much built from the same mould. When the evil King Krond bans all music, that doesn't sit well with Max, who wants to be a rock star. Max decides to make his way up the 10 floors of the Mega Hero Academy to take on King Krond and fight for the right to party. Much of the game involves moving blocks and flipping switches, while Max can also hold objects that let him perform other moves like ducking, jumping or walking faster. ■

FACT

Ritman sent a six-hour playthrough of the game to Nintendo as part of the usual submission process. Nintendo spotted a bug, so he had to fix it and record another six-hour playthrough.

MONSTER TRUCK WARS

Year 1994
Publisher Acclaim
Developer Gremlin Graphics



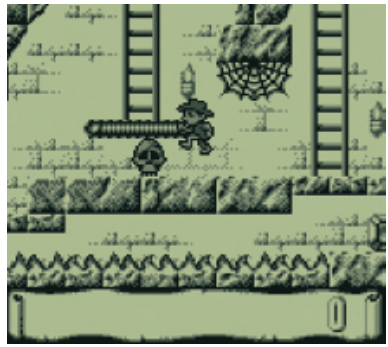
BASED ON THE shortlived TV series *USHRA Monster Wars*, this top-down racing game contains six officially licensed monster trucks from the show: Carolina Crusher, Equalizer, Grave Digger, Invader, Predator and Taurus. There are 20 courses to play through, and in each you have to first win a Time Trial qualifying event, then take part in a race against three other trucks. Naturally, given the size of the trucks, there's a lot of bumps and such to be found (as well as that classic monster truck staple, rows of hollowed-out cars to drive over and crush). Each race earns you cash which can be spent on upgrades to your engine, tyres, nitro, chassis and suspension. That last one's particularly useful for a monster truck. ■

FACT

The *Monster Wars* show featured WWF style promos in which fictional characters representing each truck gave shouty interviews. This may have been why the show only lasted one season.

MONTEZUMA'S RETURN

Year 1998
Publisher Take-Two Interactive
Developer Utopia Technologies



IN 1984, PARKER Brothers released the home computer game Montezuma's Revenge. Return is a sequel of sorts, but while the version of Return released on PC was a completely new game, this Game Boy take borrows heavily from the original, to the extent that some of the screens have the same layout. You play as Max Montezuma, the only surviving direct descendant of the Aztec King Montezuma, and the aim is to explore the 150 rooms of your ancestor's pyramid in search of hidden treasure (and a surprise final fight against the reanimated king himself). Along the way, Max can collect gems for points, and while he can't attack enemies directly he can pick up single-use items like daggers and shields to help get past them. ■

FACT

The real King Montezuma referred to in the game (and most of popular culture) was actually Montezuma II. His predecessor reigned 60 years earlier, and didn't have any lost treasure to speak of.

MORTAL KOMBAT

Year	1993
Publisher	Acclaim Entertainment
Developer	Probe

IT'S GENERALLY BELIEVED that the Game Boy version of Mortal Kombat is the worst of the bunch. While the arcade game was notorious for chucking lots of blood around and featuring gruesome Fatality moves, Nintendo's censorship made the Game Boy version blood-free and made the Fatalities significantly tamer. The seven-fighter roster in other versions is down to six here (Johnny Cage didn't make the cut), and there are only three stages in the game. The biggest complaint levelled at the Game Boy port, however, is how sluggish it is to play. The frame rate is exceptionally low and input commands seemingly have to match it, meaning it's very difficult to pull off the game's special moves, while the series' iconic uppercut takes about a month to pull off. ■

FACT

Beat the game then press Up, Left, Select and A to play as Goro. When you do this, all the other characters are renamed: Kano becomes Bob, Scorpion becomes Gary and so on.

MORTAL KOMBAT II

Year	1994
Publisher	Acclaim
Developer	Probe Entertainment

AFTER THE DISAPPOINTMENT that was the first Mortal Kombat on Game Boy, fans weren't expecting much from the second game's handheld port. As it turned out, however, Mortal Kombat II was a far more successful attempt at recreating the arcade game on Nintendo's portable. It's still obviously not perfect: the blood is still missing, for example (though at least the Fatalities are more… well, fatal-looking). The roster is once again cut down too, with only eight of the 12 characters available (there's no Johnny Cage, Baraka, Kung Lao or Raiden) and no sub-boss Kintaro. But this time, when it comes to the gameplay – which is where it really matters, after all – things run far smoother and it feels a lot closer to the arcade game. ■

FACT

Five of the eight playable characters are 'palette swaps', which means they share the same sprites to save on storage. Sub Zero, Scorpion and Reptile are palette swaps, as are Kitana and Mileena.

MORTAL KOMBAT 3

Year 1995
Publisher Williams
Developer Software Creations

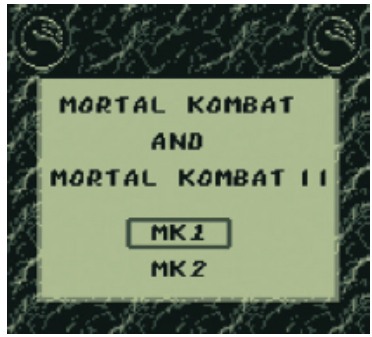
THE GAME BOY take on Mortal Kombat 3 is closer to the second game, in that it performs well but is still missing a bunch of features. The gore is still kept to an absolute minimum, and the character roster is still cut down: this time there are only nine out of 15 playable fighters (say goodbye to Shang Tsung, Jax, Liu Kang, Stryker, Nightwolf and Kung Lao), and sub-boss Motaro is missing too. There are only five stages, and the third game's new combo system – in which you can quickly tie together a string of attacks with a set button combination – is nowhere to be seen. Despite all this, it's still a perfectly competent fighting game given the Game Boy's limitations. ■

FACT

This is the only game in the Mortal Kombat series that doesn't feature any ninja characters, at least not in the traditional sense: Sub-Zero has no mask, and the palette swaps are robots.

MORTAL KOMBAT & MORTAL KOMBAT II

Year 1997
Publisher Acclaim
Developer Probe Entertainment



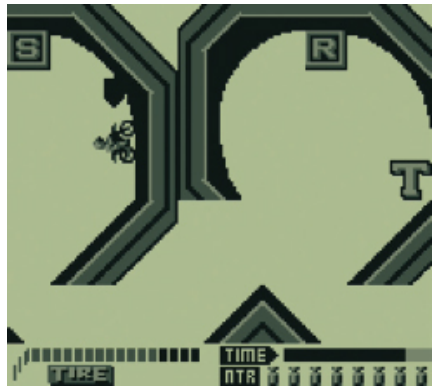
IF YOU FANCY getting Mortal Kombat II for the Game Boy but you like your cartridges to have more data on them, this could be perfect for you. As the name suggests, this compilation puts both Mortal Kombat and Mortal Kombat II on one cartridge, in theory giving you more bang for your buck. As has just been summarised on the previous page, however, whereas the Game Boy version of Mortal Kombat II was generally considered a pretty solid port, its predecessor absolutely wasn't. Although it may be nice to have the first game on here for completion's sake, in practice the only real benefit to it being on here is to make the Mortal Kombat II port look better by comparison. ■

FACT

Because he was dropped from the first two ports and was never in Mortal Kombat 3 anyway, the Game Boy is an entirely Johnny Cagefree system.

MOTOCROSS MANIACS

Year 1990
Publisher Ultra Games / Konami
Developer Konami



MOTOCROSS MANIACS IS what you'd get if Nintendo's Excitebike was a sidescrolling platformer. Or, to give it a more recent comparison, it feels like a very early ancestor of Ubisoft's Trials games. Riding on a motocross bike, you have to race through eight different obstacle-filled courses in an attempt to reach the finish line before a set time. Each track is filled with bumps, loop-the-loops and other elaborate gimmicks, and these are navigated with careful use of your bike's nitro boost and the ability to lean forwards or backwards on your bike, adjusting your balance and where the wheels land. Along the way you need to collect power-ups to top up your nitros and your fuel. ■

FACT

The fifth course has a section where you can hit a couple of nitros off a jump and land on more nitro powerups in mid-air, essentially letting you 'fly' for a while by continually using nitros.

MOUSE TRAP HOTEL

Year 1992
Publisher Electro Brain
Developer Imagineering

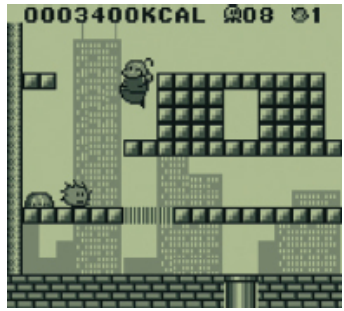
MAXIE MOUSE WANTS to pay his girlfriend a visit, but the problem is she lives in the penthouse apartment of the Mouse Trap Hotel, while he lives in the basement. Maxie has to reach the elevator at the end of each stage and take it up to the next level, slowly working his way up to the top (though why he doesn't just hit the button for the penthouse is anybody's guess). Along the way Maxie encounters a host of dangers, from mouse traps to humans trying to step on him. Mouse Trap Hotel plays similarly to numerous other Imagineering games: indeed, the music that plays when you die and get Game Over is identical to that in Bart Simpson's Escape from Camp Deadly. ■

FACT

The game's code includes a build date of June 1990, which suggests the game may have been sat on for up to two years before it was released.

MR CHIN'S GOURMET PARADISE

Year 1990
Publisher Romstar
Developer Romstar



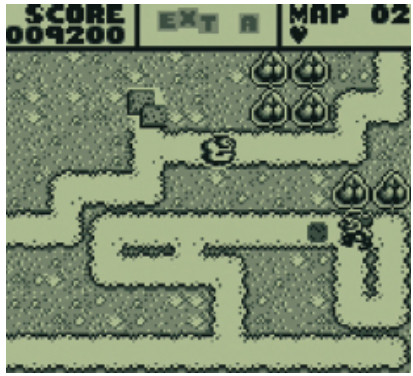
PUTTING ASIDE THE questionable Asian caricature that likely would never fly in a modern game, this action platformer has you playing as the eponymous Mr Chin, an ‘ultimate gourmet’ who’s been informed that a rare and exotic type of peach has been discovered in Owl County, Pennsylvania, but that ‘this food is mobile’ and he has to put work into getting it. The peaches turn out to actually be walking plants called Momos, and Mr Chin has to use a special tool called the Demobilizing Beam (or DEMOE for short) to transform them into peaches. Gameplay, then, involves dropping two markers on a platform to create a sort of tripwire, zapping enemies then eating the peaches they turn into. Look, I don’t know.

FACT

Mr Chin also appears in NES and arcade block-breaking game Thunder and Lighting, where he runs back and forth holding up the paddle the player controls.

MR DO!

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Ocean Ocean



ORIGINALLY RELEASED IN arcades in 1982 by Universal (not that one), Mr Do! was the first game to be released as a ‘conversion kit’ for old machines. This Game Boy port offers an audio and visual upgrade but the standard premise is the same: Mr Do is a little clown character with a penchant for collecting cherries, but the ones he wants are guarded by little red monsters called Creeps. You complete each stage by either collecting all the cherries or killing all the Creeps. The latter can be accomplished by throwing Mr Do’s ball at them, but it takes a while to spawn each one. Although the arcade version took place on a single screen, the Game Boy version zooms in and scrolls the screen instead. ■

FACT

In the original Japanese release, Mr Do was a little snowman. This was changed to a clown for the west, and that’s the design most people associate with him these days.

MR NUTZ

Year Publisher Developer 1994 Ocean Ocean

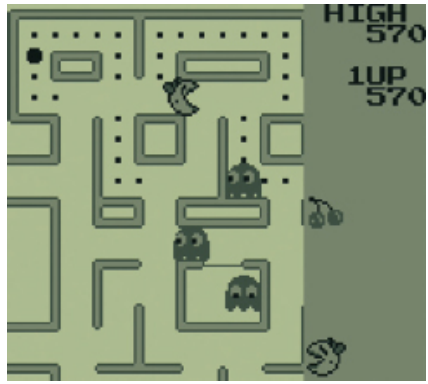
NEVER MIND GLOBAL warming, it's global cooling that's the problem in this platformer. The culprit is the Yeti, who wants to turn the Earth into a frozen kingdom and does so by cocooning the planet in ice and snow. This is no good for Mr Nutz, a squirrel who is fully aware that a colder climate won't be good for his favourite food (roasted chestnuts aside, of course). So begins a journey to take down the Yeti, destroy his plans for a worldwide chillout and bring the heat back. In typical '90s platformer fashion Mr Nutz can defeat most enemies by jumping on their heads, but he can also collect acorns to throw at the more troublesome ones. ■

FACT

In a 2015 interview, Mr Nutz artist Philippe Dessoly said he wanted to make a new 2D sidescrolling Mr Nutz game. The idea ultimately never got off the ground.

MS PAC-MAN

Year 1993
Publisher Namco
Developer Namco



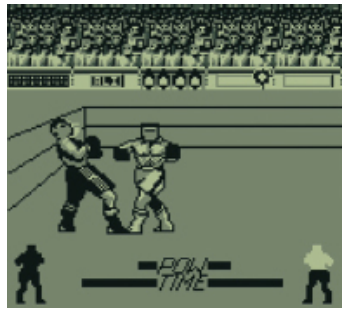
THERE ARE ACTUALLY technically two separate ports of Ms Pac-Man in this cartridge. Because of the resolution of the Game Boy's screen, the default way of playing the game is zoomed-in, with the screen scrolling as Ms Pac-Man moves around. This isn't ideal because you can't see where the ghosts or remaining dots are elsewhere in the maze, so by pressing Right on the D-Pad while starting a game you can instead play a separate port which zooms the entire screen out, giving a more practical (if less attractive) way of playing. The other main issue with the Game Boy port doesn't get a resolution: since the ghosts are all the same colour of grey, you can't tell them (and their separate personalities) apart. ■

FACT

In its early stages of development, Ms Pac-Man was called Pac-Woman and had long red hair. The hair was eventually removed and replaced by a red bow.

MUHAMMAD ALI HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING

Year 1993
Publisher Virgin Interactive
Developer Gremlin Graphics



BOXING GAME LICENCES don't get much more highprofile than the greatest of all time, so even though Muhammad Ali had retired more than a decade before Virgin Games was able to secure his name, it was still a name that was well worth getting. The Game Boy version only lets you play as Ali himself, though given the other 30- odd boxers in here are fictional names like Big Mike Glosecki and Mickey the Madman it's probably no massive loss. The main mode, World Title Trail, has you fighting up the rankings while also training to build your stats (because apparently this version of Ali is rubbish). Gameplay is sideon and while there are a variety of punches it does tend to descend into button-bashing. ■

FACT

Muhammad Ali appeared on the cover of *Sports Illustrated* magazine a total of 40 times. Only Michael Jordan managed more than this (with 50 appearances).

MULAN

Year 1998
Publisher THQ
Developer Tiertex

BASED ON THE Disney movie of the same name, Mulan has you playing as the titular Chinese teenager as she disguises herself as a boy to make it into the Imperial Army to regain the honour of her family's name. This platformer loosely follows the movie's plot and consists of six stages – the training grounds, the lake, climbing a mountain, descending the mountain, the city and the palace – most of which are typical side-scrolling affairs (with well-animated but somewhat clunky moves, Prince of Persia style). The main exception to this is the river stage, where you travel upstream without your disguise and try to avoid detection, diving under the surface any time an Imperial Army soldier passes you. ■

FACT

Mulan is based on Hua Mulan, a Chinese folk heroine from roughly the 4th–6th century. Scholars generally believe she was fictional (as was the talking dragon pal Disney gave her).

MYSTERIUM

Year 1991
Publisher Asmik
Developer Maxis

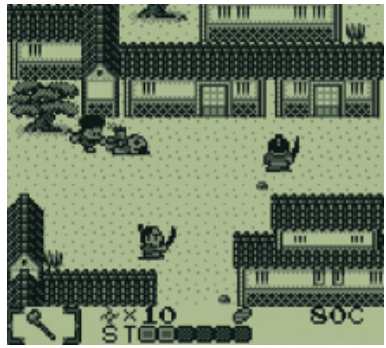
MYSTERIUM IS A somewhat unusual take on the dungeon crawling genre in that it revolves around alchemy. You've been chosen as the apprentice of famed alchemist Hermetrix, but first he's sent you to be tested in the Mysterium, a ten-floored dungeon filled with puzzles. Most of these involve combining different metals and minerals with pools of water, acid, fire and mercury to create items: for example, if you place iron into the fire you'll get a glass key, while dropping tin into water gets you honey. It's not scientifically accurate, in case you couldn't tell. The Mysterium is also inhabited by enemies, including spiders, golems and even your own shadow, meaning combat also plays a role in the game. ■

FACT

Hidden in the game's code are references to a 'final test' where the player will be able to 'solve the mystery of the Mysterium', but this 11th stage isn't actually in the game.

MYSTICAL NINJA STARRING GOEMON

Year 1998
Publisher Konami
Developer KCE Nagoya



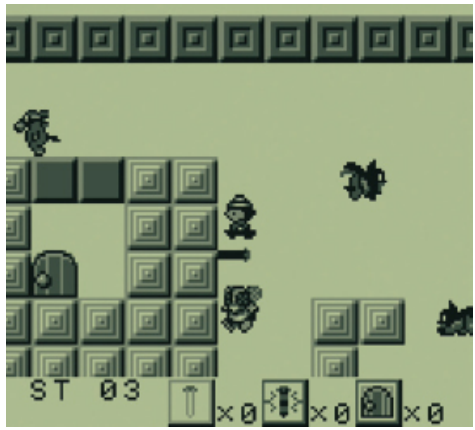
THE 12TH GAME in the Goemon series and the fourth to be released in the west, Mystical Ninja sees Goemon teaming up with two of his friends, the greedy Ebisumaru and the robot ninja Sasuke, as they attempt to rescue their ally Yae from the Black Ship Gang of pirates. The game is a top-down adventure game made up of single-screen areas, much like the original Legend of Zelda on the NES. There are five stages to fight through – Gadget Castle, the Black Ship Skull, the Demon Cave, the Skull again and Skeleton Island – and along the way you can collect shuriken to throw at your enemies (a useful tool, since melee combat has to be quite precise in this game). ■

FACT

In 2019, Goemon entered the hallowed ranks of Super Smash Bros Ultimate when his outfit was made available as a DLC costume for the game's Mii fighters.

NAIL 'N' SCALE

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Data East I'Max



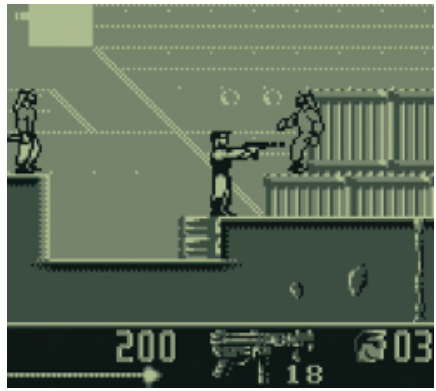
THIS PLATFORM GAME puts you in the role of Spike, a climber who has to navigate 50 mazes on the way to a battle against an evil dragon master called Lore. Each of these ‘mazes’ is actually a small platforming stage filled with stone bricks. Spike is appropriately named, because he has the ability to throw giant nails: not only do these kill many of the enemies inhabiting the maze, they can also stick into the concrete blocks. Once a nail is stuck into a block you can use it as a makeshift platform to reach higher areas. Some blocks can also be broken: by firing a nail into them then jumping up and down on the nail you can eventually break the block, unblocking some areas. ■

FACT

The game has a two-player mode where players race to beat each stage at the same time. Your opponent’s ‘shadow Spike’ can be seen on your screen.

NAVY SEALS

Year Publisher Developer 1991 Ocean Ocean



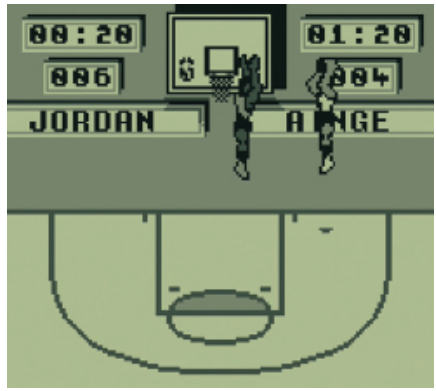
BASED ON THE Orion movie starring everyone's favourite rhyming pairing Charlie Sheen and Michael Biehn, Navy Seals opens with news that a helicopter crew has been shot down and captured by terrorists in Beirut. The five stages follow the story as you search a Beirut harbour for their hideout, storm the hideout, rescue the crew, explore a refugee ship for smuggled terrorist Stinger missiles, search the streets of Beirut for the real missiles (those were decoys) then finally make your way through the main terrorist hideout in Beirut and blow it to tiny little bits. It's a basic action platformer with running, jumping and shooting actions but you can also press Select to call on a sniper to take out everyone on the screen. ■

FACT

The name 'Seal' is an acronym of 'SEa, Air and Land', meaning they're experts in all fields. Apart from making up acronyms, it seems.

NBA ALL-STAR CHALLENGE

Year 1991
Publisher LJN
Developer Beam Software



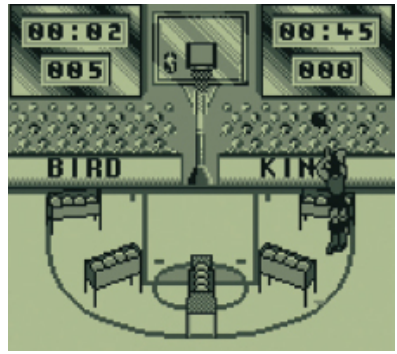
RATHER THAN FEATURING proper games of basketball, All- Star Challenge instead chooses a single player to represent each of the NBA teams – Barkley for the 76ers, Bird for the Celtics, Jordan for the Bulls and so on – and offers four separate mini contests. There's straight one-on-one basketball against another player, there's a free throw contest (where you have to score as many as possible), H.O.R.S.E. (where each time a player misses a shot they gain a letter until it spells 'horse') and Accuracy Shoot-Out (which is the same as H.O.R.S.E. except it's against the clock instead of another player). There's also a Tournament mode where you can choose eight players and enter them into a knockout tournament of one-on-one games. ■

FACT

The players don't appear to have any strengths or weaknesses, so you can avoid that nagging doubt that you should be playing as Michael Jordan every time.

NBA ALL-STAR CHALLENGE 2

Year 1992 *Publisher* LJN *Developer* Beam Software



WHILE THE FIRST All- Star Challenge was also released on the SNES and Genesis, it was seemingly decided that a series of short events worked better in handheld form and so the sequel was a Game Boy exclusive. As well as a roster refresh for some of the teams' representatives – say goodbye to the likes of Danny Ainge, Tom Chambers and Dale Ellis, say hello to the likes of Shawn Kemp, Reggie Miller and Dekembe Mutombo – All- Star Challenge 2 also updates the list of events, dropping H.O.R.S.E. and adding 3-Point Shootout and Slam Dunk Contest modes. Given that Accuracy Shoot-Out is basically H.O.R.S.E. anyway, this is probably the best of the two games to get. ■

FACT

By the time Danny Ainge retired in 1995, he had the highest personal winning percentage of any player in NBA history, with a rather nice 69% win rate. So he had the last laugh.

NBA JAM

Year 1994
Publisher Acclaim
Developer Beam Software

MIDWAY'S 2-ON-2 ARCADE basketball game was such an enormous success that home ports a-go-go were the order of the day. The Game Boy version was never going to come close to matching the coin-op original in terms of detail but it has a crack at it. All 27 NBA teams and their two-man rosters are included here, as are the same rule-breaking, ridiculous dunks and 'on fire' gimmick. That said, NBA Jam was a three-button game, meaning the Game Boy version has rather awkward controls in which the player has to hold down the Start button for their turbo boost, making it harder to shove and dunk. The lack of player names and the fact that teammates use the same sprite makes it impossible to tell who's who. ■

FACT

There are still some hidden characters in the Game Boy version (such as Bill Clinton), but they still look identical to their partners during gameplay, even if they're a different race.

NBA JAM: TOURNAMENT EDITION

Year 1995
Publisher Acclaim
Developer Torus Games

NBA JAM'S ENHANCED update also received the Game Boy treatment, and once again the handheld did its best to keep up with all the new features added. The introduction of extra players to each roster (meaning players can choose a line-up that suits their playing style) was added here too, as was the new Tournament Edition features. These include Hotspots – which give you extra points if you score while standing on them – and a range of collectable power-ups which temporarily increase your 3-point ability, speed or power, or let you dunk from anywhere on the court. None of this helped resolve the Start button turbo issue, of course, but it's probably as accomplished a port as the Game Boy could have managed. ■

FACT

Early test arcade versions of Tournament Edition included a Mortal Kombat themed cheat code called Fatalities On. If you turned it on and went 'on fire', you could push enemies to set them ablaze.

NBA LIVE 96

Year 1996
Publisher Black Pearl Software
Developer Tiertex Design Solutions

THE PROBLEM WITH team sports games on a system like the Game Boy is developers often need to think of ways to support a large number of sprites on-screen at the same time. NBA Live 96 is unfortunately an example of how this can go wrong, as any time action nears the basket the screen is covered in blank lines and the action slows to a complete crawl. On paper it does everything right: it's got all 29 NBA teams and all the real player names, and you can choose between a 28, 56 or full 82-game season. Ultimately, though, NBA Live 96 has to go down as evidence that sometimes a game's ambition can surpass what the system is actually capable of.

FACT

Other teams never turn down trade requests in Seasons mode so you could, for example, start a season with new team the Raptors and bring over all the league's best players on day one.

NEMESIS

Year 1990
Publisher Ultra Games / Konami
Developer Konami

ALTHOUGH NEMESIS WAS the international name for Gradius on some formats, this Game Boy release is a completely new game. The canonical story has you piloting the Vic Viper fighter ship as you take on the Bacterian Army on the planet Nemesis, but the US manual makes up an odd new story in which you're the chief of the Interplanetary Police flying a 'Proteus 911' to fight 'King Nemesis' (who doesn't actually exist). Regardless of which plot you go with, the result is the same: a side-scrolling shoot 'em up with the same 'power meter' as Gradius, where you gather energy items until you have enough to 'bank' in return for the power-up you want. ■

FACT

The Japanese version of the game doesn't show your score in the corner of the screen, and only displays it when you lose a life, clear a stage or get Game Over.

THE NEW CHESSMASTER

Year	1993
Publisher	Hi Tech Expressions
Developer	Park Place Productions

RELEASED TWO YEARS after The Chessmaster, you'd be forgiven for wondering exactly what could be added to The New Chessmaster to make it worth upgrading from the first game to the second. In reality, the answer is 'nothing much': indeed, unless you have a really keen eye you'd be hard pushed to actually notice anything different between The Chessmaster and The New Chessmaster (even the title screen is practically identical). The only notable difference is that the Settings menu now has a light screen instead of a dark one. Owners of the first game can rest easy, then: there are no revolutionary new approaches to digital chess in this 'update', and anyone looking to buy either version should just get whatever's cheapest. ■

FACT

Chessmaster used to be considered one of the best AI chess engines, but in 2020 the latest version was ranked 121st by the Computer Chess Rating List, which pits them against each other.

NFL FOOTBALL

Year Publisher Developer 1990 Konami Konami

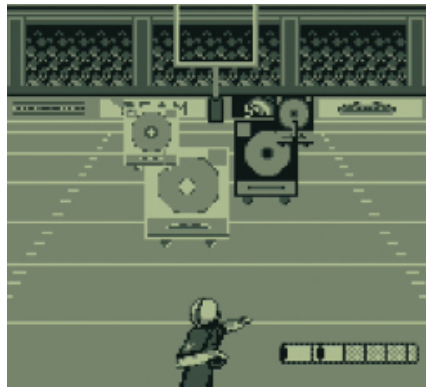
AS THE FIRST American football game released on the Game Boy, NFL Football is fairly basic, but that's not to say it's entirely without merit because it does still have the official NFL licence, with all 28 teams to choose from (though there are no player names). Other than this, however, it shows all the hallmarks of an early sports game on the handheld, with no gameplay modes beyond one-off exhibition matches and no options beyond a 'normal' or 'short' game (i.e. 15-minute or 10-minute quarters). There are six plays to choose from, though they're all essentially passing plays, and gameplay is on the slow side, meaning the game is arguably more important as a milestone than anything else these days. ■

FACT

The game's box promises that 'getting your helmet split by a blind-sided hit has never been more fun', a statement that hasn't aged so well in these days of concussion protocols.

NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB

Year 1993
Publisher LJN
Developer Beam Software



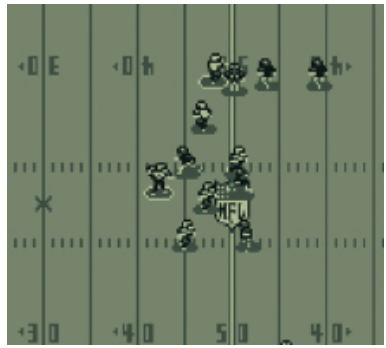
SIMILAR IN A sense to NBA All-Star Challenge, the first Quarterback Club is based on the NFL Quarterback Challenge, a real-life annual contest at the time. Rather than offering full team-based games, the game lets you choose from 13 real-life NFL quarterbacks – Young, Elway, Aikman, Kosar and the like – and put them through four different mini-games based on different skills. Accuracy Challenge has you throwing the ball at targets, Read & Recognition does the same but flashes specific targets to hit, Speed & Mobility is an obstacle course and Distance Challenge is a buttonbasher where you have to throw the ball as far as possible. As well as practising a single event, you can also take on a tournament where you play all four in sequence. ■

FACT

The Quarterback Challenge ended in 2007. The final event (the 18th in total) was won by Oakland Raiders quarterback Josh McCown.

NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB II

Year Publisher Developer 1995 LJN Condor



DESPITE KEEPING THE title, the second game ditches the whole Quarterback Challenge thing altogether and resorts to standard, teambased American football gameplay. All the official NFL teams are included, and while there are no player names some of the teams still have key quarterbacks playing for them. This is reflected in the play selection: if you've chosen a team that features one of the 'Quarterback Club', the passing plays will be changed to include some of that quarterback's real-life signature plays. Other than this gimmick, the game plays like a standard American football game, albeit one that only offers exhibition matches. There's also the option to replace the player sprites with Xs and Os, if you're really obsessed with playbooks. ■

FACT

Nobody managed to win the Quarterback Challenge three times during the 18 years it ran. Dan Marino, Randall Cunningham and Jake Plummer each won it twice, though.

NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB 96

Year 1995
Publisher Acclaim
Developer Condor

IT WAS THIRD time lucky for the NFL Quarterback Club series on the Game Boy, with the ‘96 edition adding a season mode to extend the game beyond simple exhibition matches. The previous game’s horizontal viewpoint was ditched in favour of a vertical one to match most of the American football games of the era, which in turn made passing a little easier. New animations for fumbles and dives were added to make the game more visually appealing and more signature quarterback moves were added: a real coup for fans of the ‘Bledsoe Bullet’. The option to swap players with Xs and Os was removed, however, so it wasn’t all great news if you were a Tic Tac Toe devotee. ■

FACT

The Quarterback Club series would continue into the PS2 and GameCube era, but this was to be the last handheld entry: there were none released on Game Boy Color or GBA.

NHL HOCKEY 95

Year Publisher Developer

1995 Malibu Games Malibu Games

EA'S NHL SERIES was so popular on consoles (especially the Genesis) that the publisher attempted to bring it to the Game Boy. NHL Hockey 95 features every real-life team from the 1994–95 season, but while it also included player names these were all fake. There's no season mode, but players can at least take part in a playoffs, or a best-of-seven playoffs. As EA would later demonstrate with NBA Live 96, the Game Boy often struggled with team sports, but NHL 95 gets round this by zooming the action in close (so that fewer players can appear on-screen at once) and using a flickering effect during busy scenes (the screen's slow response time made it look grey instead). ■

FACT

Both NHL games insist on showing the full credits before the main menu. NHL 96 is the worst offender, taking around 40 seconds from the moment you turn on the Game Boy.

NHL 96

Year 1996
Publisher Black Pearl Software
Developer Probe Entertainment

THE ONLY THING that was really missing from NHL Hockey 95 was a season mode, meaning players were limited to either single exhibition matches or a knockout playoffs mode. NHL 96 rights this wrong with the addition of such a mode, allowing players to take on a full 84- game season with their chosen NFL team. The player names are still entirely fake, which probably explains why there's no trading option or anything of that ilk, but the season mode at least adds some longevity to the game. Other than that, when it comes to the actual action on the ice it's practically identical to NHL Hockey 95, right down to the chunky sprites and the performance-boosting flicker effect. ■

FACT

Many of the fake player names include athletes from other sports, such as boxer Frank Bruno, footballer 'Dennis Berkamp' and snooker player Sefton Payne.

NIGEL MANSELL'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RACING

Year 1992
Publisher GameTek / Nintendo
Developer

Gremlin Graphics

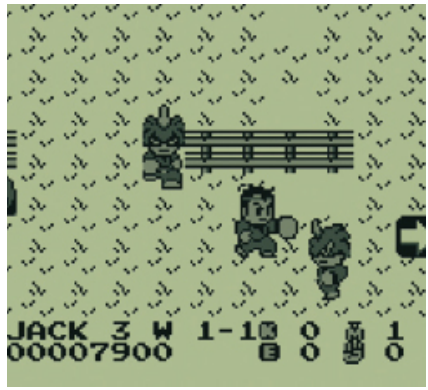
ORIGINALLY RELEASED ON the Amiga, this racing game opted for a first-person, in-car view of the action. Rather than ditching this in favour of something more 8-bit friendly, the Game Boy version attempts to stick with it and the results are reasonable, even if the frame rate is on the choppy side. The game is based on the 1992 Formula One season and includes all 16 tracks from that season, played in order, as well as the real-life names of the other F1 racers competing at the time. As well as the full Grand Prix there's also a Driving School mode, where you can practise each track at a lower speed, which gets increasingly higher as you complete each lap. ■

FACT

In 1977, Mansell crashed during practice at Brands Hatch and broke his neck. In 1980 he crashed again, fracturing vertebrae. Despite this he went on to win the F1 Championship in 1992.

NINJA BOY

Year Publisher Developer 1990 Culture Brain Culture Brain



IN 1984, TOKYO studio Culture Brain started a Famicom series called Super Chinese, which led to a spin-off Game Boy series called Super Chinese Land. Ninja Boy is the western version of the first Super Chinese Land, and has you playing as Jack, a young Ninja who has to enter the Yoma Clan's camp, defeat the Dragon Shogun and rescue his girlfriend Princess Ling-Ling. Each of the game's 32 stages is filled with enemies, and the aim is simply to wander around, punching and kicking as many of them as you can until a set number are defeated, at which point the exit to the next stage will open. Like its NES predecessor, the game has oddly familiar Mario-like sound effects when you collect coins and 1-Ups. ■

FACT

The Super Chinese series on Super Famicom was called Super Chinese World, further ripping off the Mario naming scheme (Super Mario, Super Mario Land, Super Mario World).

NINJA BOY 2

Year 1993
Publisher Culture Brain
Developer Culture Brain

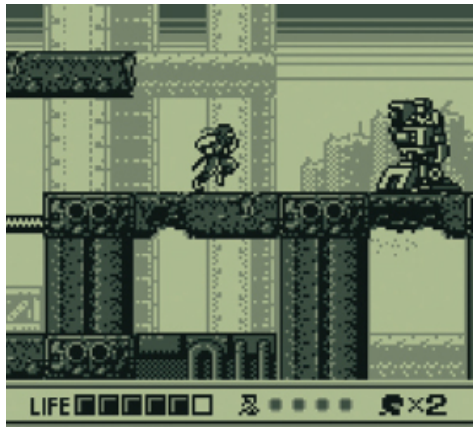
SUPER CHINESE LAND 2 was also given a western release as Ninja Boy 2. This time the game is set in space for some reason with Jack, his friend Ryu and a bunch of other friends from 'Chinaland' enjoying a holiday on the Marco Polo Clustars. Suddenly a giant spaceship piloted by 'the warriors of the galaxy' appears and blows up Jack and Ryu's ship, but not before they can escape in an escape pod. Thus begins an adventure over numerous planets as our heroes seek revenge. Rather than the straight fighting game that was Ninja Boy, the sequel is more of an RPG, with the player exploring large world maps and encountering random battles. These battles are still beat 'em up style rather than turn-based, however. ■

FACT

The last Super Chinese game was Super Chinese Labyrinth, a puzzle game released as part of a two-in-one cartridge on the Game Boy Advance.

NINJA GAIDEN SHADOW

Year 1991 *Publisher* Tecmo *Developer* Natsume



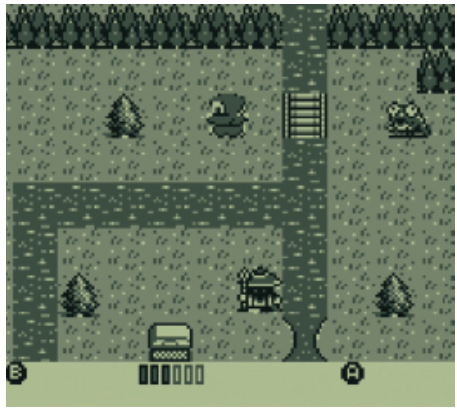
THIS IS AN odd one. In 1990, Natsume released NES game Shadow of the Ninja, which was a clear imitation of Tecmo's Ninja Gaiden. It then started work on a Game Boy sequel, but at some stage Natsume and Tecmo joined forces and it was instead given Ninja Gaiden branding, essentially making it part of the series it was copying in the first place. It's set three years before the events of Ninja Gaiden, when protagonist Ryu Hayabusa is still training to be a ninja. As such, he doesn't have the ninja arts moves from the main series, though he does still have his Art of the Fire Wheel special move, which fires a spinning flame attack at particularly tricky enemies. ■

FACT

The September 1991 issue of *Nintendo Power* still refers to the game as Shadow of the Ninja, implying the shift to Tecmo's series was relatively late in development.

NINJA TARO

Year 1992
Publisher American Sammy
Developer NMK



THE SEVENTH GAME in the Ninja JaJaMaru-kun series, Ninja Taro opens with warlord Nobu Oda hearing rumours that his long-time rival Shin Takeda has died. Oda calls for the greatest ninja warrior around, and so Ninja Taro is sent to see him. Taro is tasked with heading out to find out whether Takeda is actually dead, which would leave Oda free to conquer and unify the nation. The game is played from an overhead perspective similar to the early Legend of Zelda games, but it's a bit easier than them because there's no real puzzlesolving to be found. Taro is normally armed with his standard sword but he can earn a more powerful Murasame sword, throwing knives and throwing stars. ■

FACT

Nobu Oda and Shin Takeda are supposed to be Oda Nobunaga and Takeda Shingen, leading figures of the Sengoku period in Japan.

NINTENDO WORLD CUP

Year Publisher Developer 1991 Nintendo Technos Japan

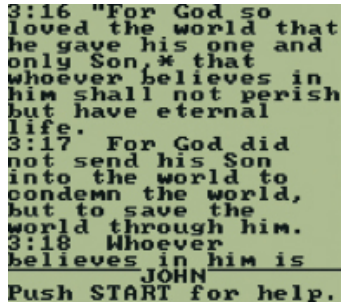
NINTENDO WORLD CUP was originally released on the Famicom as part of the Kuniokun series (which included River City Ransom) and featured Japanese high school teams (including protagonist Kunio's Nekketsu High School) taking part in a tournament. This western version ditches the high school gimmick and goes for more traditional international teams, of which there are 13 to choose from. Despite the attempt to appear more like a serious football game on the game's packaging, Nintendo World Cup still has the Kunio-kun series' silliness at its core. Players can score comically over-the-top overhead kicks that send goalkeepers flying, and the pitch types aren't limited to grass: concrete fields are commonplace, and you can even play on pitches covered in rocks you can trip over. ■

FACT

Although the Famicom version had high school teams, the Japanese Game Boy version uses Nintendo World Cup's international teams, though it still replaces Japan with Nekketsu High School.

NIV BIBLE & THE 20 LOST LEVELS OF JOSHUA

Year Publisher Developer 1996 Wisdom Tree Wisdom Tree



HAVING THE ENTIRE King James Bible on a Game Boy cartridge is all well and good, but what if you hate its archaic language and want something more contemporary, or you're more Evangelical than Anglican? Religious developer Wisdom Tree didn't want to leave anyone out, so two years after releasing the Game Boy version of the King James Bible it did the same with the New International Version. After you've had a ruddy good read, you may be in the mood for some downtime, so the cartridge also includes 20 new stages of Joshua and the Battle of Jericho, meaning you can read about the battle (Joshua 6: 1-27, if you're looking) then play a weird Boulder Dash clone that's nothing like it. ■

FACT

The NIV is the bestselling translation of the Bible in the US, according to the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association. Though they would say that, to be fair.

NOBUNAGA'S AMBITION

Year Publisher Developer 1991 Koei Koei

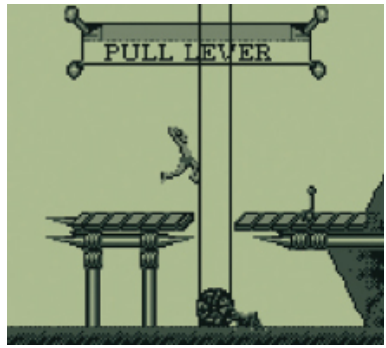
AS IS THE case with its numerous home computer and console versions, Nobunaga's Ambition on Game Boy is a turn-based 'grand strategy' RPG in which your main aim is to conquer and unify feudal Japan during the Sengoku period. Despite the game being named after him, you don't have to play as Oda Nobunaga: you can choose any daimyo (feudal lord) from the various fiefs in Japan, and start your plan to take over. There are over 100 military personalities in the game to either join or oppose you, meaning the game clearly has a great degree of scale. What it doesn't have, however, is the numerous scenarios the other versions offer, meaning you have to start each game with the same layout each time. ■

FACT

In real life, Nobunaga died before he was able to unify all of Japan. His successors, Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu, finished the job for him 18 years later.

ODDWORLD ADVENTURES

Year Publisher Developer 1998 GT Interactive Saffire



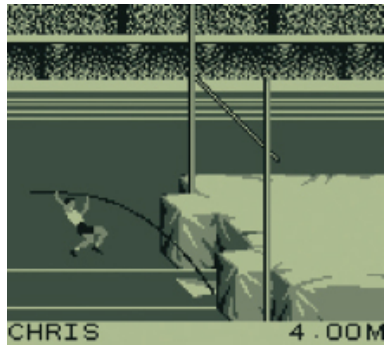
THIS IS A handheld port of PS1 game Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee, but it's a massively cut down one. Rather than attempting to replicate the whole game, Oddworld Adventures instead replicates the Paramonian Temple section of the game, which appears roughly halfway through the second act. As such, the difficulty curve is quite steep because the easier sections have been skipped. Technically the game does still have Oddysee's 'GameSpeak' gimmick, in which Abe can speak to other characters, but because this particular section of the game doesn't use this gimmick much, it's only used for a single puzzle in the game. Oddly, the PS1 GameSpeak voice samples aren't used in the game, but they can still be heard by pausing the game and pressing D-Pad directions. ■

FACT

The game has a glitch in which you can jump as high as you want by jumping, pausing the game in mid-air, unpausing and jumping again, and repeating. Falling too far kills Abe, though.

OLYMPIC SUMMER GAMES: ATLANTA 1996

Year	1996
Publisher	Black Pearl Software
Developer	Tiertex



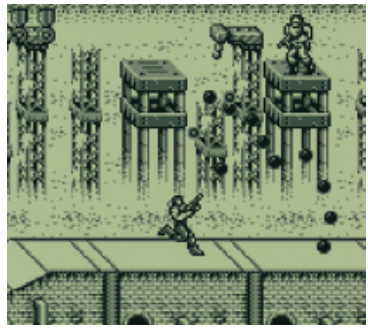
HOW COULD YOU have possibly enjoyed the Atlanta 1996 Olympic Games without a digital recreation in your pocket? Luckily, this Game Boy version prevented that dilemma from becoming a reality. The game has 10 events to choose from: the 100m Sprint, 110m Hurdles, Pole Vault, High Jump, Long Jump, Triple Jump, Javelin, Discus, Archery and Skeet Shooting. You can either play through them all in sequence, choose your own playlist of up to 15 events (meaning you can repeat your favourites) or just practise one over and over until you can make a legitimate claim that you're the best in the world at Skeet Shooting in Atlanta 1996 on the Game Boy. And that's something nobody could ever, or ever want to, take away from you. ■

FACT

Fourteen of the United States' 44 gold medals at Atlanta 1996 were won in swimming events, but the video game doesn't have a single swimming pool in sight.

OPERATION C

Year Publisher Developer 1991 Ultra Games / Palcom Konami



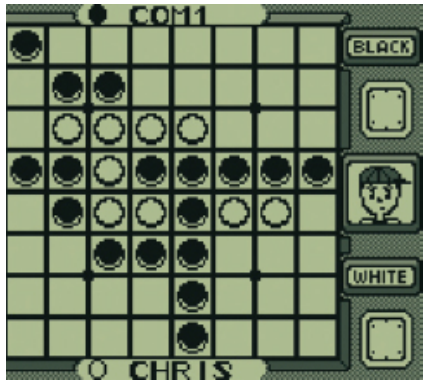
ALTHOUGH CONTRA III would be released on the SNES the following year, Operation C (known as Probotector in Europe) is technically the third game in the Contra series, following on from Contra and Super C. According to the US version of the plot, you play as protagonist Lance from the previous games and have to defeat an alien entity called Black Viper by travelling to his island hideout and destroying his army of killer aliens. The game plays similarly to previous Contra games, and its five stages switch between side-scrolling and top-down action. Autofire is standard for the first time in a Contra game, and the Homing Gun is also new to the series, allowing you to take out enemies without having to specifically point at them. ■

FACT

In the Japanese plot, you instead play as Contra's other hero Bill, and are taking on a hostile nation that's using alien tech to build weapons of mass destruction from a South Pacific island.

OTHELLO

Year 1990
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Kawada



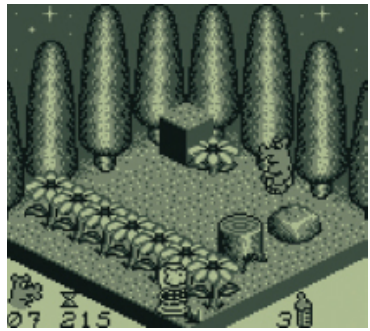
FOR THOSE NOT in the know, Othello is the modern and most commonly used version of the board game Reversi, which is played with black and white discs. Players take turns placing their discs onto the board, and the aim is to flip your opponent's discs over to your colour by sandwiching them. Whoever has the most discs in their colour by the time the board is full wins the game. This Game Boy adaptation has four levels of AI to play against, designed to appeal to all players from complete beginners to Othello experts. Naturally, there's also the option to play against a human opponent, played by passing the Game Boy between you for each turn. A simple but functional adaptation, then. ■

FACT

Goro Hasegawa, who created the Othello brand, said he named it after Shakespeare's play because of the drama between Othello (who's Black) and Desdemona (who's Caucasian).

OTTOS OTTIFANTEN: BABY BRUNO'S ALPTRAUM

Year 1998
Publisher Infogrames
Developer Bit Managers



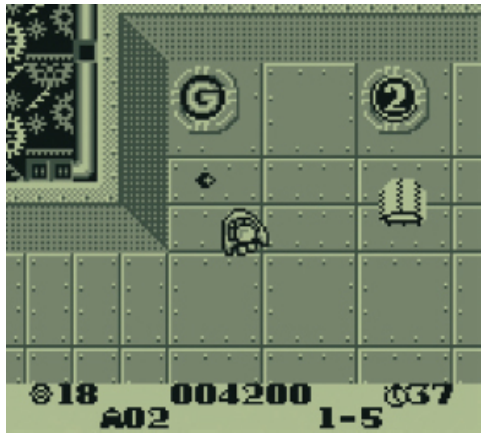
BASED ON THE Ottifanten cartoons by German comedian Otto Waalkes, this is an isometric platformer similar to the likes of Monster Max and Die Maus, but the difference here is that rather than a larger world connected by single screens, each screen in this game is a standalone level. The story goes that baby Bruno's teddy bear Honk has been stolen by an evil magician, so Bruno has to make his way through a forest, castle and prison to find it. Each stage has a time limit, and while it's possible to complete a level after the timer runs out, it's in your best interests to finish it faster: any seconds left are added to a total and when you hit 300 you get an extra life. ■

FACT

Don't worry about Honk, none of this actually happened: the title translates to Baby Bruno's Nightmare, so it was all a dream.

OUT OF GAS

Year Publisher Developer 1992 FCI Realtime Associates



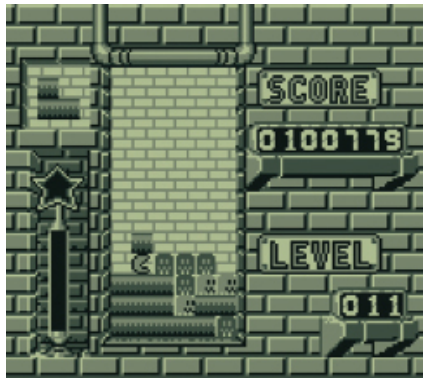
IT'S THE 23RD century, and teenage wide boy Eric has managed to convince his dad to give him the keys to his new space shuttle so he can take a girl called Natasha out on their first date. Guess what happens next! No, they run out of gas. Natasha isn't impressed, so Eric hops out on his space scooter to retrieve some more gas, and if he doesn't do it quickly enough that first date will quickly become a last one. Out of Gas consists of 64 stages, and in each Eric has to collect gas tanks by shooting at them (for some reason). In some stages these tanks have to be shot in a certain order, and there's a tight time limit, so careful route planning is needed. ■

FACT

The game's mechanics are taken from the NES version of game show Fun House, which was designed by Lennard Feddersen. Out of Gas credits him for 'Original Design'.

PAC-ATTACK

Year Publisher Developer 1994 Namco Now Production



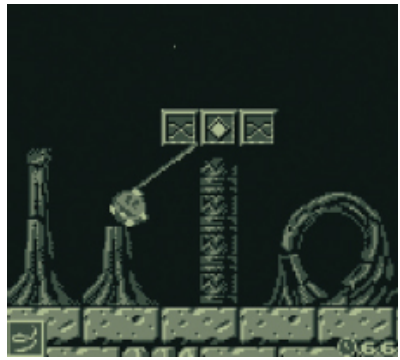
KNOWN IN EUROPE and its native Japan as Pac-Panic, this is what you'd get if you cross Tetris with Pac-Man. Players are given small L-shapes made of three blocks, and are tasked with dropping them into a well, Tetris-style. As in that most famous of puzzlers, if you can make a full horizontal line of blocks, that line will disappear. The problem is, some of the blocks are ghosts instead, and they block you from clearing lines. The only way to get rid of the ghosts is to wait for a Pac-Man block to drop. When it does, it'll travel forwards and downwards until it hits a dead end, eating any ghosts it passes. Success, then, comes in lining up paths of ghosts to munch through in one go. ■

FACT

This was the 10th official Pac-Man game, but the first one not to be released in arcades (although Cosmo Gang: The Puzzle, which it was based on, was an arcade game).

PAC-IN-TIME

Year 1995
Publisher Namco
Developer Kalisto Entertainment



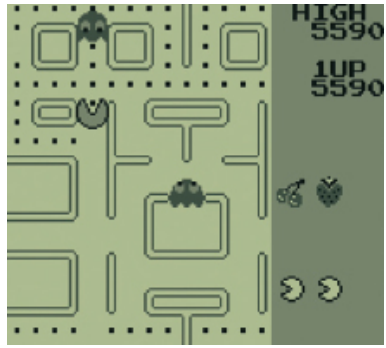
ALTHOUGH IT'S TECHNICALLY a Pac- Man platformer, Pac-in-Time was originally a computer game called Fury of the Furries before it was reskinned for the SNES and Game Boy. Pac-Man has been sent back to the year 1975 by the evil Ghost Witch, so he has to fight through 50 stages to find the Ghost Witch and defeat her so he can return to the present day. In Fury of the Furries, players could switch between a group of coloured furry ball-shaped monsters, each of whom had different abilities. In this version, Pac-Man takes the place of all of them, and the player simply switches between the abilities. These include the ability to fire a grappling hook, throw fireballs and swim underwater. ■

FACT

Pac-Man's ability to eat through blocks is represented by a hammer icon. That's because the SNES version replaced the ability with a sledgehammer and the icon wasn't changed for the Game Boy.

PAC-MAN

Year 1991
Publisher Namco
Developer Namco



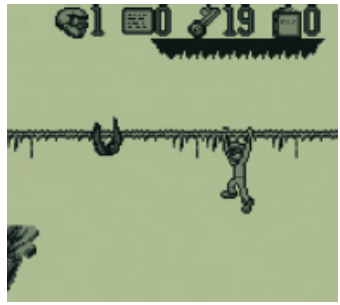
THESE PAC-MAN PUZZLE games and platformers are all well and good, but what about those who want the original arcade game that started the whole craze off in the first place? That's exactly what you have here, though given the Game Boy's limitations there are some concessions. As in the Ms Pac-Man port, the ghosts are all grey, meaning you can't tell their personalities apart. The screen is also zoomed in and scrolling, though as in Ms Pac-Man you can play zoomed out by pressing Right on the D-Pad on the title screen. One thing it does boast is the ability to join two Game Boys with the Link Cable and play a competitive two-player mode, where the player with the best score over four stages wins. ■

FACT

It's well-known that Pac- Man was originally called Puck-Man until the name was changed to prevent vandalism. In an early design document, though, the game was briefly known as Snapper.

THE PAGEMASTER

Year	1994
Publisher	Fox Interactive / Virgin Interactive
Developer	Probe Entertainment



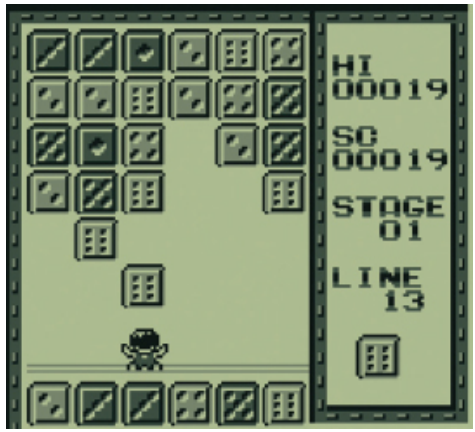
THE PAGEMASTER WAS a motion picture flop starring Macaulay Culkin, which was both live-action and animated (much like Culkin himself). The game is a platformer in which you play as Culkin's character, Richard, as he finds himself trapped in a literary world. Although you can technically beat the game by simply playing through its three worlds – Horror, Adventure and Fantasy – you can only get the 'good' ending by collecting the eight hidden library cards dotted around the game. Richard can pick up weapons to help him defeat the enemies he encounters, including a pirate sword, magic dust and a bag of throwable eyeballs. And, of course, if all else fails there's always the tried and tested 'jump on their heads' method. ■

FACT

Don't bust your buns too hard trying to get the good ending: it's literally just a screen saying 'well done' as opposed to one saying 'sorry, you didn't get all the library cards'.

PALAMEDES

Year 1991
Publisher Takara
Developer Natsu System



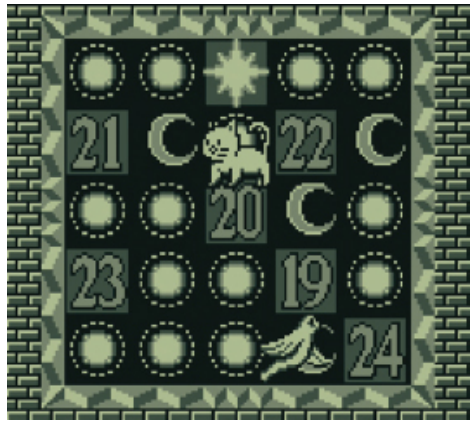
THIS IS A fastpaced puzzle game where rows of dice progressively descend towards you. You're armed with a die of your own, and can change it to whatever number you want by toggling with the B button. The aim is to fire dice at matching numbers in the rows to eliminate them. They drop too fast to simply shoot them out one at a time, however, which is where the bottom row comes into play. The last six dice you've cleared appear at the bottom of the screen: if you can clear them in a set order, you can clear a bunch of lines at once. The best (and trickiest) example is clearing them in 1-2-3-4-5-6 in that order, which will instantly clear five lines. ■

FACT

A sequel was released for the Famicom in Japan. It was called Palamedes 2: Star Twinkles and was pretty much the same thing except you fired blocks downwards instead of upwards.

PANEL ACTION BINGO

Year Publisher Developer 1993 FCI Locus



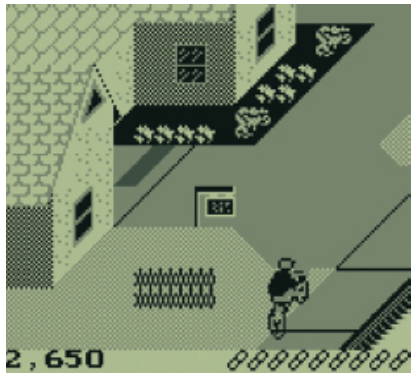
THIS SLIGHTLY ODD action game takes place on a giant bingo card (which can either be made up of numbers or letters, your choice). Playing as a dove, you have to fly over all the numbers (or letters) in sequence, turning them round. Once you've turned round a full row or column of numbers, you get a 'bingo' and the stage is cleared. The twist is that there's also a cat running around the stage, and it's trying to hit the numbers first. Any numbers it manages to hit before you don't count towards your bingo, meaning as the cat gets faster in later stages your chances to complete full lines are lessened. There's also a whacka- mole type bonus stage where you race to hit moles instead. ■

FACT

If you fancy a little more chaos in your life, there's an option to make the cat teleport around the screen instead of running around, meaning you can't tell where he'll land next.

PAPERBOY

Year 1990
Publisher Mindscape
Developer Eastridge Technology



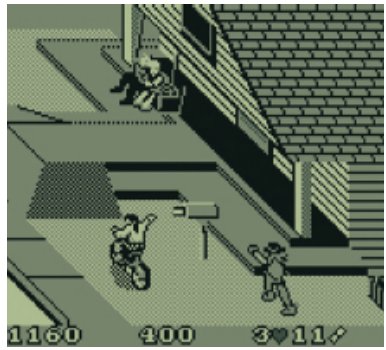
ATARI'S POPULAR 1985 arcade game was ported to more than 20 systems, so it would have been frankly rude to ignore the Game Boy. As in the coin-op version, you play as a young paperboy out on his daily route. As you ride your bike through the street, you have to deliver newspapers by throwing them at subscribers' houses: ideally landing them in their mailboxes (for bonus points), but on the doorstep will do too. Not everyone is an avid newspaper reader, so if you come across a non-subscriber's house you can get extra points for smashing their windows by launching a paper through them. All manner of obstacles and residents try to get in your way, from breakdancers and workmen to the Grim Reaper itself. ■

FACT

One subtle gameplay element of the arcade version not present in the Game Boy port is the house colours. Subscribers' houses are painted lighter, while non-subscribers' houses are grey or black.

PAPERBOY 2

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Mindscape Eastridge Technology



IF THERE'S ONE criticism you could level at Paperboy (other than its promotion of breaking windows with newspapers) it's the game's outlandish disregard for gender equality. Paperboy 2 rights this egregious wrong by letting you choose between either a paperboy or a papergirl, allowing those of an XX chromosome persuasion to commit property damage too. There's more variety in the styles of houses you'll come across too: now streets have mansions, haunted houses and kids' clubhouses, while newly added set-pieces give you points for doing good deeds, such as stopping prams from rolling away. The game's main new mechanic is the ability to switch between sides of the road, meaning you can now throw papers to the left or right depending on where subscribers' houses are located.

FACT

If you save the baby's pram (or do other good deeds like preventing burglaries), you'll appear on the front page of the next day's newspaper.

PARASOL STARS: RAINBOW ISLANDS II

Year 1991
Publisher Ocean
Developer Ocean

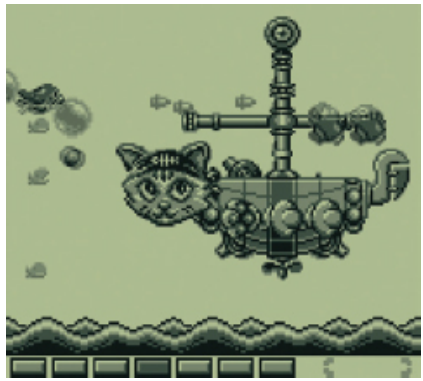
GIVEN THAT TAITO'S Rainbow Islands was the sequel to Bubble Bobble, Parasol Stars is technically Bubble Bobble 3. It would have been a more appropriate title, because unlike Rainbow Island's scrolling stages, Parasol Stars mainly takes place across a series of small, self-contained levels like those in Bubble Bobble. The main gimmick in this game is an umbrella, which can be used to scoop up smaller enemies and throw them at enemies. There are also large water droplets in most levels, which can also be grabbed and thrown. You can also gather five droplets to form a bigger water bubble, which will have one of four special powers (fire, water, lightning or star). ■

FACT

Although the box says Rainbow Islands 2, the title screen does indeed say 'The Story of Bubble Bobble III'. In 1995, Taito released Bubble Memories, which also said that on the title screen.

PARODIUS

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Palcom Konami



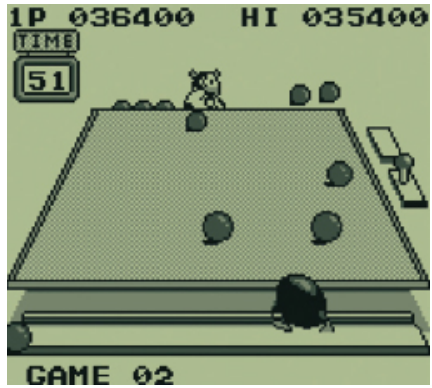
MUCH LIKE THE NES and SNES versions, the Game Boy port of Konami's arcade shooter Parodius was only released in Japan and Europe: they must have thought America really hated parodies (poor Weird Al). That's what this is, after all: as the name suggests, it's a parody of the Gradius series, meaning it's a side-scrolling shoot 'em up but one where the more conventional sci-fi enemies have been replaced by massive pirate penguins, 300-foot Las Vegas dancing girls stamping on you and evil clowns spitting pies at you while music from the Nutcracker plays. Although you can play as conventional Konami game ships like TwinBee or the Vic Viper from Gradius, you can also play as an octopus or Pentarou, the Parodius penguin mascot. ■

FACT

Parodius actually has two Konami Code cheats. Enter it when the Palcom logo appears for a sound test, and enter it while the game is paused to fully power up your ship.

PENGUIN WARS

Year Publisher Developer 1990 Nexoft / Nintendo ASCII Corporation



KNOWN IN EUROPE as King of the Zoo, this is a sort of one-on-one version of dodgeball starring a penguin, rabbit, bat, rat and cow. Competitors stand at either end of a large table and are each given five balls. The aim is to roll your balls down the table to your opponent's side. If one side ends up with all 10 balls they lose, otherwise the player with the most balls on their side after 60 seconds loses. The dodgeball element is the ability to hit your opponent with the ball: this stuns them for a few seconds, giving you time to throw balls over unchallenged. Succeeding, then, is a case of grabbing and throwing your balls while also keeping an eye on the incoming ones. ■

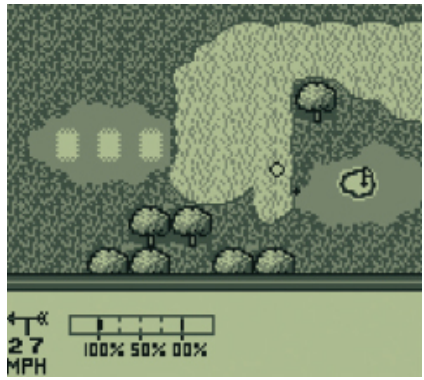
FACT

A remake of Penguin Wars was released on Switch and PS4, but was pulled from the PS4 store in 2020 when publisher Dispatch Games lost its digital publishing agreement with Sony.

PGA EUROPEAN TOUR

Year Publisher Developer

1995 Malibu Games
Unexpected Development



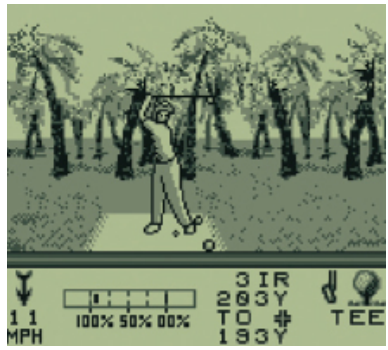
THIS SPIN-OFF OF the PGA Tour series focuses solely on European golf, giving the player four courses to choose from: the Forest of Arden in Warwickshire, England; Wentworth in Surrey, England; Crans-sur- Sierre in Switzerland and Valderrama in Sotogrande, Spain. Although the PGA Tour series was originally known for offering the most realistic golf graphics for its time, developer Unexpected Development wisely chose to play to the Game Boy's strengths – or rather its weaknesses – and ditched the usual over-the-shoulder viewpoint for a top-down one. This may make the game less visually striking (though the swing animation is excellent) but it does make it a lot more playable, and one of the better golf games on the handheld. ■

FACT

Seve Ballesteros helped to rebuild the greens at the Crans-sur-Sierre course in 1997. The club was so happy with his work that they renamed the course after him.

PGA TOUR 96

Year 1995
Publisher Black Pearl Software
Developer Unexpected Development



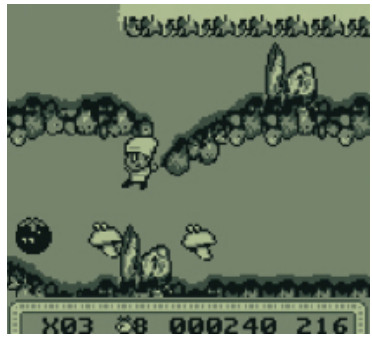
UNEXPECTED DEVELOPMENT'S DECISION to completely revamp the PGA Tour gameplay for the Game Boy in European Tour clearly went down well, which is why it went for the 'if it ain't broke' mentality for its next game. PGA Tour 96 focuses solely on US courses, of which there are five: Summerlin in Las Vegas, Sawgrass in Florida, Avenel in Potomac, Woodlands in Houston and the Scottsdale, Arizona course. Players can either play a practice round, a two-player skins game for cash, or a four-round tournament, and the game also includes real-life players as potential opponents, including Brad Faxon, Davis Love III, Craig Stadler and everyone's favourite 'professional golfer who also sounds like a Builda- Bear Workshop creation', Fuzzy Zoeller. ■

FACT

At the time of writing, Fuzzy Zoeller is one of three golfers to have ever won the Masters at his first attempt. It's not currently known how cuddly he is though.

PIERRE LE CHEF IS OUT TO LUNCH

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Mindscape Mindscape



OUT TO LUNCH got a North American release on the SNES, but the Game Boy version was Europe-only. The game stars Pierre le Chef, a fortunately-named cook touring the world to make the finest delicacies. The problem is, the ingredients he's looking for are a little too fresh, in that they're running around all over the place. You have to travel through 40 stages across five regions: Switzerland, Greece, the West Indies, Mexico and France. In each stage, you have to find your net, then catch the ingredients, dumping them in a cage as you do. If you get hit while you're carrying ingredients they'll fall out of your net and run off again, so frequent trips to the cage are recommended. ■

FACT

The other versions of the game have a sixth world set in China, so if you have access to a SNES or Amiga you might want to go for one of those versions for the 'complete' course, as it were.

PINBALL DELUXE

Year Publisher Developer 1995 GameTek Spidersoft

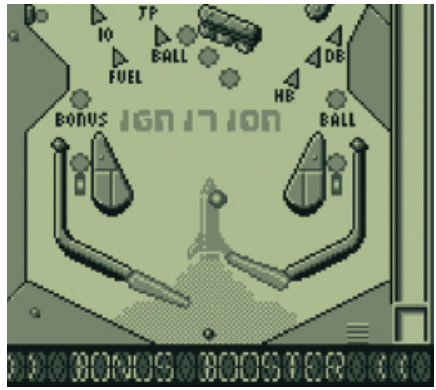
PINBALL DELUXE IS a European release that essentially combines Pinball Dreams and Pinball Fantasies into one giant ball 'em up. The separate entries for each game will go into more detail on each of their tables, but Pinball Deluxe brings every table from each game and puts them into one big menu. That means you get Ignition, Steel Wheel and Graveyard from Pinball Dreams, as well as Party Land, Speed Devils, Million Dollar Game Show and Stones N Bones from Pinball Fantasies, for a total of seven tables. It goes without saying, then, that if you don't have either game and you fancy a spot of pinball on your portable then Pinball Deluxe is probably the one to look for first. ■

FACT

In 2002, Ubisoft released Pinball Challenge Deluxe on the Game Boy Advance. It too combined Pinball Dreams and Fantasies, but it added the missing eighth table, Beat Box.

PINBALL DREAMS

Year Publisher Developer 1993 GameTek Spidersoft



ORIGINALLY RELEASED ON the Amiga, Pinball Dreams is a compilation of three pinball tables, each with a distinct theme. Ignition is a space-themed table which revolves around trying to get a rocket to launch, Steel Wheel has an Old West theme and focuses on the advent of steam trains, and Graveyard is a horrorthemed table with the typical ghosts and such you'd expect from such spooky frivolity. One notable exception is Beat Box, the fourth table from the Amiga version, which is nowhere to be seen here. While each table also has its own Game Boy-ified version of their Amiga soundtracks, a lot of the table decoration has been removed, making each table look far more similar than they do on other formats. ■

FACT

If it's any consolation, the Beat Box table had a huge bug in the Amiga 1200 version of the game that stopped most of its advanced features working.

PINBALL FANTASIES

Year 1995
Publisher GameTek
Developer Spidersoft

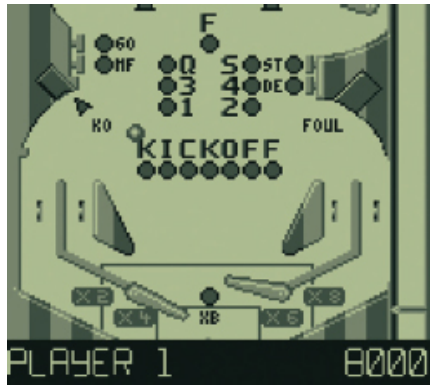
THE SEQUEL TO Pinball Dreams was more of the same, offering a further four tables of ball-flipping ballyhoo. And when I say four tables I mean it this time, with no cuts made for the Game Boy version (other than the severe visual ones, of course). Party Land is the first of these, and has a theme park gimmick. Speed Devils has a racing theme, with the aim being to overtake cars and win races (by hitting the ball through ramps, obviously, not actually driving). Billion Dollar Game Show is a parody of TV game shows, with prizes on offer like TVs and cars. Finally, Stones N Bones is apparent proof that you can never have too many haunted house pinball tables. ■

FACT

The Amiga versions of Pinball Dreams and Pinball Fantasies were the first games developed by Digital Illusions, which became Digital Illusions Creative Entertainment, i.e. Battlefield developer DICE.

PINBALL MANIA

Year 1995
Publisher GameTek
Developer Spidersoft



AFTER DEVELOPING THE console versions of Pinball Dreams and Pinball Fantasies, Spidersoft was allowed to make its own PC spin-off while series developer Digital Illusions worked on the 'real' sequel, Pinball Illusions. That spin-off was Pinball Mania, which got a Game Boy version in the same style as Spidersoft's previous ports. There are another four tables to choose from here, starting with the obligatory horror one, Tarantula, which has a retro B-movie theme about a giant spider terrorising a village. Then there's Jailbreak, which has you digging an escape tunnel out of prison, followed by Kick-Off, a football-themed table. Finally, Jackpot has a casino theme and includes a built-in slot machine. ■

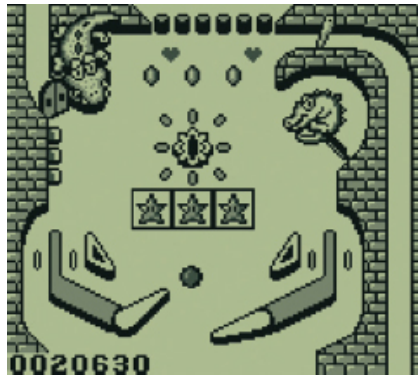
FACT

In 1996 Spidersoft released Pinball Builder, a PC game that let players design their own table, either by using preset pieces or importing their own images.

PINBALL: REVENGE OF THE GATOR

Year Publisher Developer

1990 HAL Laboratory HAL Laboratory A FEW YEARS before



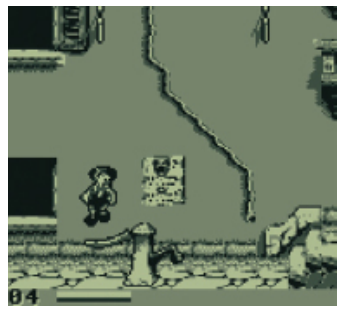
HAL Laboratory gave us Kirby's Pinball Land, it released this alligatorthemed pinball game which clearly served as inspiration. Revenge of the Gator is a tall table that takes place over four quarters: rather than scrolling the screen vertically – making the player aim at targets they can't see – each of the four areas is a standalone screen with its own flippers, with gaps at the top and bottom to send the ball up or down a screen. Naturally, you'll want to have the ball at the top screen as often as possible: not only does it offer big points and a chance for an extra ball, it also means you have to lose the ball three times before a life is lost. ■

FACT

The game's Japanese title is Pinball: The Great 66-Alligator Parade, and the box claims that '66 gators are aiming for your ball'. I can only count 43, but what do I know?

PINOCCHIO

Year Publisher Developer 1996 Black Pearl / Virgin Interactive NMS Software



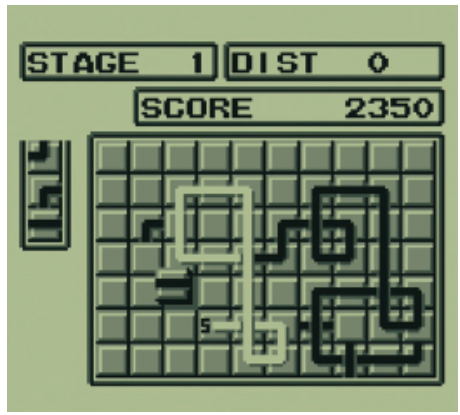
PINOCCHIO WAS THE fourth of Virgin Interactive's visually impressive 16-bit platformers (after Aladdin, The Jungle Book and The Lion King) and the fourth to get a somewhat cut-down Game Boy port too. Like its console compatriots, the Game Boy version is based on the events of Disney's classic 1940 movie, and follows Pinocchio as he finds himself on the notorious Pleasure Island, is eaten by the giant whale Monstro then has to escape to freedom. The Game Boy's sprites are just downgraded from the 16-bit version, meaning they look quite rough but are well animated. More notably, though, the Game Boy version only has seven stages compared to the nine stages offered by the Mega Drive and SNES versions. ■

FACT

The missing stages from the Game Boy version are a marionette show level (which is more of a mini-game) and a swimming stage where Pinocchio escapes Monstro by grabbing onto fish.

PIPE DREAM

Year Publisher Developer 1990 Bullet-Proof Software
Bullet-Proof Software



KNOWN ON OTHER formats as Pipe Mania (and known to Bioshock players as the hacking mini-game), this puzzler focuses on a fictional slime called flooz. The flooz is slowly working its way through a pipe, and it's up to the player to contain the flow by laying new pieces of pipe, creating a pathway for it to follow. The game takes place on a grid and each square contains a small section of pipe that's initially either straight, curved or cross-shaped. You're given a series of these squares and have to place them on the grid to keep the pipe going, but you have to be quick because if the flooz reaches the end of the pipe or hits a wall it's Game Over. ■

FACT

Lucasfilm was involved in Pipe Dream's release on other formats. It decided a planned two-player mode should be ditched, which the game's co-creator John Dale says was the right decision.

PIT-FIGHTER

Year Publisher Developer 1992 THQ Eastridge Technology

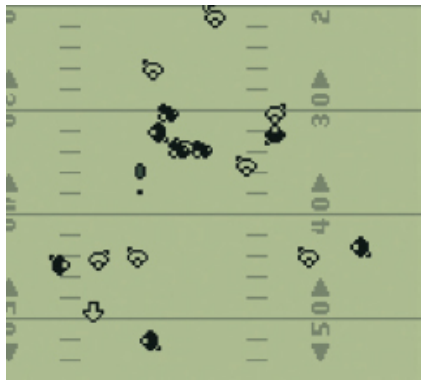
IN A SECRET arena underneath the city streets, the Pit-Fighters gather to see who the ultimate warrior is. The first rule about Pit-Fighting is… well, insert the cartridge, probably. You choose between three would-be champions – former pro wrestler Buzz, kickboxer Ty or black belt Kato – and work your way through five opponents: the hooded Executioner, biker gang member CC Rider, the weapon-wielding Chainman Eddie, femme fatale Angel and the champion, Ultimate. The aim is simply to deplete all your opponent's energy before you lose all yours, while occasionally you'll get 'grudge matches' where you have to get three knockdowns instead. The Game Boy version is missing three of the opponents from the arcade version, as well as the ability to pick up weapons. ■

FACT

Marc Williams, the actor whose digitised likeness was used for Ty in the game, starred in Jean Claude Van Damme movie *A.W.O.L.* in the coveted role of 'New York Homeless Fighter #1'.

PLAY ACTION FOOTBALL

Year Publisher Developer 1990 Nintendo Tose



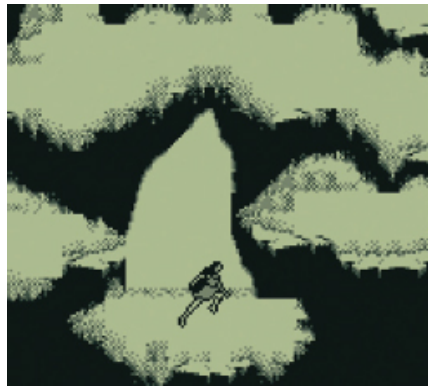
ALTHOUGH IT SHARES a similar name to Nintendo's console game NES Play Action Football, this Game Boy offering is different in a number of ways. The most obvious is the change in viewpoint: whereas the NES game is played from an isometric view, the Game Boy version is vertically-scrolling instead. While it features the same eight unlicensed teams as the console version, the Game Boy release is also missing the NFLPA licence, meaning those eight teams don't have real player names like they do on the NES. The result is a game that, with only exhibition and playoffs modes, is rather on the limited side, even if the (visually simplistic) gameplay is functional enough to keep players entertained for a while. ■

FACT

When you come close to a First Down and the refs bring the chain out to measure it, you see a closeup of the ball, which has a Nintendo logo on it. Those guys make everything.

POCAHONTAS

Year Publisher Developer 1996 Black Pearl Software Black Pearl Software



DESPITE BEING A major Disney animated movie, *Pocahontas* only got video game adaptations on the Mega Drive and the Game Boy, and the latter came exactly one year after the movie's premiere. The game is a sort of puzzle platformer where you play as both Pocahontas and her raccoon chum Meeko, switching between them as required. Meeko has a limited set of skills, such as climbing trees, pushing small objects and jumping into Pocahontas' arms. Pocahontas, on the other hand, can earn nine new abilities by helping animals she encounters along the way. By helping an owl, for example, she earns the ability to see in the dark, while helping an otter lets her dive into water and swim through it. ■

FACT

A Game Boy rendition of the movie's song 'Steady as the Beating Drum' is tucked away in the game's code, but never actually appears in the game at any point.

POCKET BOMBERMAN

Year Publisher Developer 1998 Hudson Soft Hudson Soft

IT WOULD HAVE been easy for Konami to release another straightforward replica of the typical Bomberman gameplay, like Bomber Boy before it. Instead, Pocket Bomberman offers a curious twist on the format by turning the game into a side-scrolling platformer instead. Bomberman is tasked with visiting the Evil Mountain and collecting the five Power Stones being held by monsters there, in order to remove a dark cloud covering the sun. While Bomberman can run and jump as in any platformer, he can still drop bombs which still explode in a '+' shaped explosion. The bombs are solid objects, making for high-risk strategies like creating temporary, explosive staircases to help you reach higher areas (as long as you're quick enough to jump up them). ■

FACT

Pocket Bomberman includes a mini-game called Jump Game, in which a continually jumping Bomberman has to ascend a vertical stage. It's basically Doodle Jump 12 years earlier.

POKÉMON BLUE VERSION / RED VERSION

Year 1998
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Game Freak

THE GAME BOY was fairly basic technology when it was released in 1989, so by the second half of the 1990s it's fair to say its popularity was waning as players looked forward to a successor. Then came Pokémon, and suddenly the Game Boy was the hottest thing on the playground. Originally released in Japan in 1996 as Pocket Monsters Red and Green with an enhanced Blue edition released eight months later, Pokémon took a while to come to the west but was revolutionary when it did. Players are tasked with leaving their humble village in Pallet Town and exploring the region of Kanto in an attempt to become a Pokémon Master. To do this, they have to find the eight Gym Leaders dotted around Kanto, defeat them to gain their Gym Badges, then use these to enter the illustrious Indigo League and face the Elite Four. The game was monumental for many reasons, not least the fact that it brought the RPG genre to a new generation of western players in a way that was more approachable. By giving The 151st Mew, could legitimately obtained physical Nintendo events. That impossible to today without or using glitch. players 151 unique monsters to catch, collect, train, battle and share, children who wouldn't otherwise

have raised a single eyebrow at the likes of Final Fantasy were all in on this new phenomenon. The series may have evolved to the extent that Red and Blue feel quite clunky now – especially in the early stages of the game where the tutorial feels endless – but its impact on video games will never waver. ■

FACT

The 151st Pokémon, Mew, could only be legitimately obtained through physical Nintendo promotional events. That means it's impossible to 'catch 'em all' today without cheating or using a glitch.

POKÉMON YELLOW VERSION

Year 1999
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Game Freak

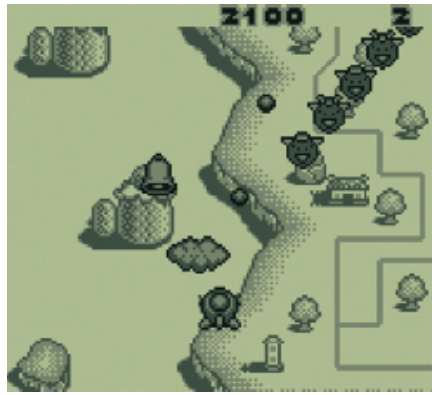
POKÉMON RED AND Blue weren't only successful as a video game: the animated TV adaptation was also an enormous success both in Japan and the west, further cementing the brand's status as a global craze. There was just one issue: the cartoon's plot didn't exactly follow that of the games. For starters (quite literally), the player picks either a Charmander, Squirtle or Bulbasaur as their starter Pokémon in the game, but in the cartoon the hero Ash is given a Pikachu instead. Human characters in the show didn't quite look like their cartoon counterparts either. This was remedied with Pokémon Yellow, a special version of Pokémon Red and Blue that made a number of changes to better reflect the TV show. The most obvious of these is that, as in the show, you no longer get to choose a starter Pokémon and are instead given Pikachu, while your rival gets an Eevee. Pikachu follows along behind you instead of staying in a Pokéball – just like his animated counterpart – and the character designs of the likes of Team Rocket and the Pokémon Center nurses have been redesigned too. While critics agreed that Pokémon Yellow was a little better than Red and Blue, they were also mainly unanimous that the game wasn't different enough to consider it a proper sequel. Instead, it was recommended as the first game for those who hadn't already bought Red or Blue, rather than a viable update for existing fans craving more content. ■

FACT

The starter Pikachu had its battle cry changed to that of the TV show's Pikachu. Every other Pokémon in the game (including other Pikachu) have their usual Game Boy chiptune battle cries.

POP 'N TWINBEE

Year 1994
Publisher Konami
Developer Konami



DESPITE THE NAME, this is not a port of the SNES game Pop ‘n TwinBee, which was the sixth game in the series. Instead, this is a westernised port of TwinBee Da!!, the fourth game in the series, which was released in Japan in 1990. Playing as adorable blue bumblebee android TwinBee, you have to travel to Puka Puka Island to take on Dr Nikki, the deranged childhood rival of TwinBee’s inventor Dr Cinammon. The game plays similarly to other entries in the TwinBee series, offering vertical-scrolling shoot ‘em up action taking place over six stages. As is TwinBee tradition, power-ups come in the shape of bells, which have to be shot and juggled to change their colour (and therefore the reward offered). ■

FACT

If you’re a big fan of retro gaming merchandise that’s potentially extremely dangerous to own today, Konami released TwinBee Da!! batteries in 1992 to be used with the Game Boy.

POPEYE 2

Year Publisher Developer

1993 Activision Copya Systems

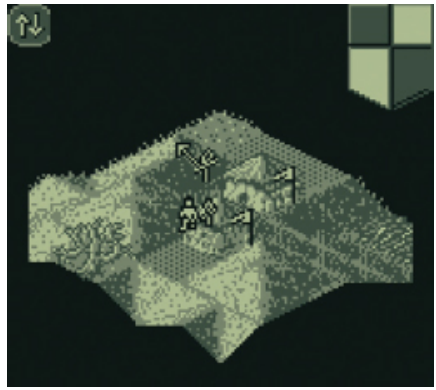
BEFORE IT BECAME Mario's debut, the original Donkey Kong was originally supposed to be a Popeye game until Nintendo failed to secure the licence. It's probably fitting, then, that Popeye 2 borrows heavily from the Super Mario series. Popeye and Olive Oyl were out to sea, looking for a treasure map, when Bluto boarded the ship, threw Popeye overboard and sailed off to Treasure Island. Cue a straightforward platformer in which players have to find and defeat Bluto to rescue his friends and the treasure. The main game mechanic is Popeye's punching arm, which gets bigger and has increased range as he collects more cans of spinach. There's also a Link Cable 2-player mode where Popeye and Bluto race to clear each stage first. ■

FACT

If you're wondering what happened to the first Popeye, it was a Game Boy maze game that was only released in Japan.

POPULOUS

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Imagineer Enigma Variations



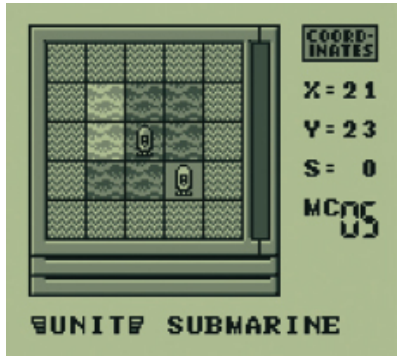
EASILY ONE OF the more complex games to be ported to the Game Boy, Populous is a god game – widely believed to be the first of its kind – in which you oversee a small world and can manipulate it in an attempt to make your little clan of people thrive. First and foremost, you have to raise and level the land so they have somewhere to raise crops, construct buildings and multiply in numbers. As your community grows, so too do your powers, allowing you to create volcanoes, earthquakes and fiery rain. Why use such deadly force? Because sharing the map is a second, evil clan, and the ultimate goal is to wipe them off the land and ensure only your people survive. ■

FACT

The Game Boy version adds the Silly Land and Bit Plains landscapes included in expansion packs on other versions. The latter is a digital world that replaces houses with PCs and Game Boys.

POWER MISSION

Year 1991
Publisher NTVIC
Developer Graphic Research



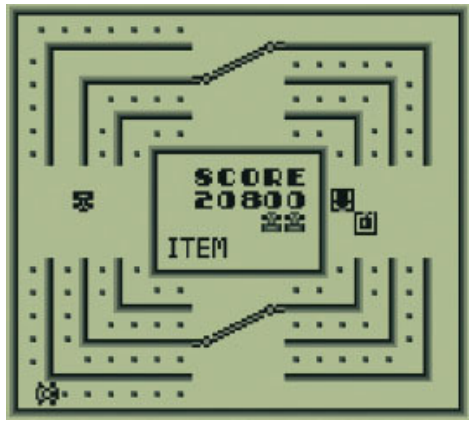
POWER MISSION IS what you would get if Battleship was expanded beyond a single grid and became more of a proper strategy game rather than an exercise in guesswork. As the commanding officer of a naval fleet, you have to defeat the battleships of the enemy nation of Jagoda over the course of 11 separate missions. You can choose from a series of pre-arranged fleets, each consisting of a mixture of six units – flagship, battleship, cruiser, destroyer, submarine and fighter jet – each with their own unique abilities. The fighter jet can pass over land but has very low armour, for example, while the tougher flagship and battleship can fire radar missiles which help you detect the position of enemy ships from a distance. ■

FACT

A completely different NES game called Power Mission was previewed in *Nintendo Power* magazine, but this would eventually be renamed Power Blade before release.

POWER RACER

Year Publisher Developer 1990 Tecmo Graphic Research



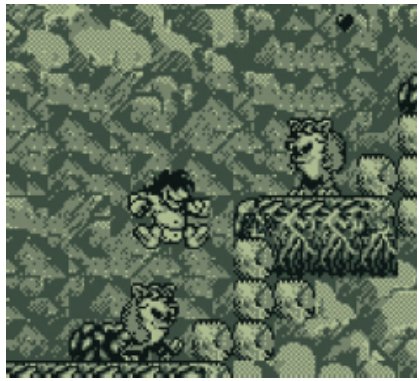
PAC-MAN MAY HAVE been considered groundbreaking, but it wasn't actually the first game about collecting dots in a maze. That was Head- On, a 1979 arcade game developed by Sega and Gremlin. Head-On was ported to a number of systems, but whereas the Game Boy version retained that name in Japan, it was renamed Power Racer in the west. The aim is to drive your car around a maze collecting 'power points', but you can only steer left and right to change lanes, or press a button to go faster: you can't turn back. At the same time, another car is driving round the maze in the other direction, and is trying to crash head-on into you, so you have to plan ahead and switch to different lanes to avoid them. ■

FACT

Before the two became rivals, Nintendo got a licence from Sega to release its own clone of Head-On in arcades, called Head- On-N.

PREHISTORIK MAN

Year Publisher Developer 1996 Titus Software Titus Software



RATHER THAN A straight port of the SNES game, Prehistorik Man on the Game Boy is a mostly new adventure. The game follows a caveman called Sam as he heads out on a simple quest: to collect enough food to put together a feast for his family. He does this via 10 stages of platforming action, where he has to use his club to take out any enemies in his way. Prehistorik Man was programmed by Elmar Krieger, an Austrian developer who worked on the home computer demo scene (making animations that stretched what computers were capable of). As a result, Prehistorik Man is one of the more visually impressive Game Boy games, with parallax scrolling and large enemy sprites with no flickering. ■

FACT

If you enter Left, Right, B, A, Up, Down, A, B, Right, Left on the title screen the game plays a hidden message from Krieger, but it's painfully slow and scrolls by one letter at a time.

PRIMAL RAGE

Year 1995
Publisher Time Warner Interactive
Developer Probe Entertainment

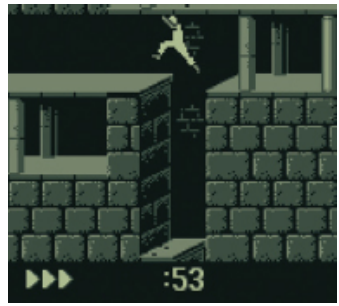
PRIMAL RAGE IS a fighting game similar to Mortal Kombat in that one of its main selling points is its digitised graphics. Whereas Mortal Kombat used live actors, Primal Rage instead offered seven stop-motion dinosaurs. As such, however, Primal Rage suffers from the same problems on Game Boy as Midway's fighter does, in that much of that visual impact is missing. What remains is a competent enough handheld fighting game, albeit one missing many of the arcade version's features such as the ability to perform fatalities or to eat tiny humans to regain health. One thing the Game Boy version does manage to achieve, however, is a full roster: all seven dinosaurs from the arcade version are present here, even if their movesets have been limited. ■

FACT

The arcade version of Primal Rage contained a security method so unusual that to this day it can't be emulated without some features (such as fatalities and red blood) being missing.

PRINCE OF PERSIA

Year Publisher Developer	1992 Mindscape / Virgin Interactive Broderbund



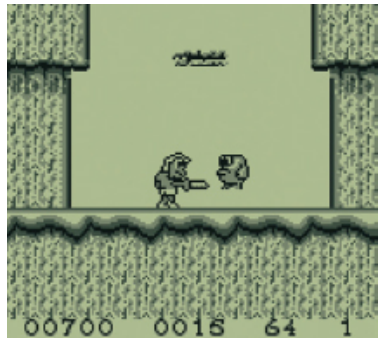
WITH MORE PORTS than a winemaker's warehouse, it stands to reason that Prince of Persia would also find itself on the Game Boy. You play as an unnamed adventurer – not actually a prince, as is commonly wrongly assumed – who's won the heart of the Sultan's daughter. When the Sultan leaves town, the evil vizier Jaffar takes over and has you sent to the dungeons. Jaffar gives the princess an ultimatum: agree to marry him within one hour, or die. You have to make your way out of the dungeon and defeat Jaffar before the hour runs out. The game was famous for its realistic, rotoscoped animation (which means it was drawn over real footage), and this is faithfully recreated on the Game Boy. ■

FACT

While most of the game's animations were rotoscoped from footage of creator Jordan Mechner's younger brother, the sword fighting was taken from 1938 movie *The Adventures of Robin Hood*.

PROPHECY: THE VIKING CHILD

Year 1992
Publisher GameTek
Developer Imagitec Design



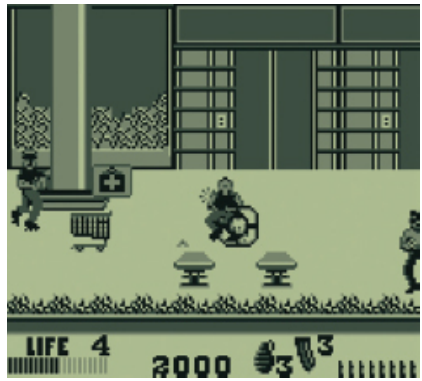
KNOWN SIMPLY AS Viking Child on other formats, this action platformer sees the once idyllic Northlands plunged into chaos by the evil Odin, its people imprisoned by his dark magic. You are Brian, the titular Viking Child, and armed with your sword you have to make your way to the dangerous Western Lands, passing through eight locations along the way – a village, a well, a castle, a forest, lava fields, the ocean floor, a landbridge and Odin's mountain home – defeating bosses along the way. Brian's sword usually does the job for smaller enemies but he can also collect and buy more powerful weapons and spells to help defeat the bosses, such as little fire sprites that home in on enemies, or blaster bombs.

FACT

The European packaging for the Amiga and PC versions refer to the game as Prophecy I: The Viking Child. A sequel was indeed planned, but never materialised.

THE PUNISHER

Year 1991 *Publisher* Acclaim *Developer* Beam Software



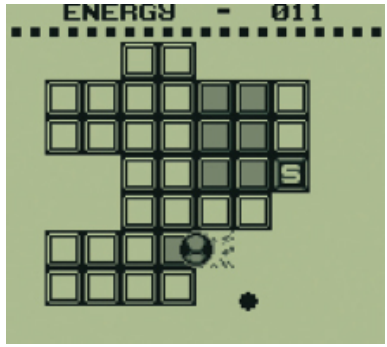
THERE AREN'T MANY lightgun shooters on the Game Boy – the lack of an actual lightgun being a likely factor – but The Punisher brings the genre to the handheld with gusto. You play as the titular vigilante as he attempts to track down one of his most dangerous enemies, Jigsaw. This nasty sod is involved in a huge drug operation, so off you trot on his trail, passing through a shopping mall, a marina, an airport and a jungle (with your finger permanently pressed on the trigger, naturally) before finally reaching Jigsaw's underground base. Early in the game Spider-Man will appear to help as you try to rescue hostages in the mall, but Spidey isn't the killing type and before long he swings off, leaving the carnage to you. ■

FACT

Just before he kills Jigsaw at the end of the game, The Punisher says: 'Penance is good for the soul, but punishment is good for the guilty.' Words to live by. Probably.

PYRAMIDS OF RA

Year 1993
Publisher Matchbox
Developer Micros



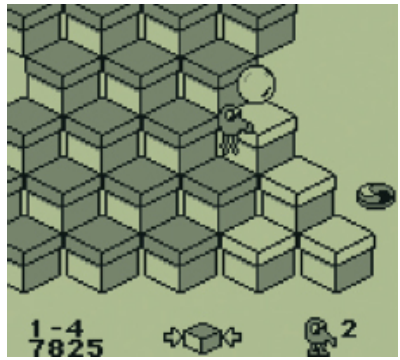
THIS TRICKY ACTION puzzle game supposedly has you playing as an archaeologist exploring the various rooms of a pyramid, but in reality it's just a bouncing ball travelling over squares. The idea is that each of these squares represents a crumbling floor tile, and the aim in each stage is to destroy every square before returning to your starting point. Naturally, if you move onto an empty space you'll fall to your doom, so the trick is planning a route in advance that will cover every square. There are thousands of levels in the game, and things get more complicated with the introduction of special tiles: some of these take two hits to break, others flip your controls, and others flip the screen entirely, which can be disorientating. ■

FACT

The game was originally due to be released on the NES under the name Scarabeus, but it was scrapped. Retro specialist Piko Interactive finished and sold the NES version in 2019.

Q*BERT FOR GAME BOY

Year 1992
Publisher Jaleco
Developer Realtime Associates



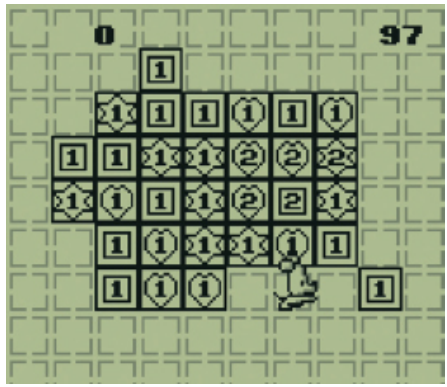
RATHER THAN A direct recreation of Gottlieb's 1982 arcade game, Realtime Associates' take on Q*Bert adds a few extra features. As in the arcade version, the trunk-nosed titular character has to clear each stage by jumping on the cubes that make it up, changing their colour. Once all the cubes are the required colour, it's onto the next level, but there are a variety of enemies jumping around too, to mess up Q*Bert's day. The Game Boy version improves on the arcade original in some ways by adding a variety of stage designs instead of a single pyramid, but the lower resolution screen also means the action is zoomed in rather than showing the whole stage (though you can pause to see everything). ■

FACT

After some stages, the Game Boy version shows cutscenes called Q*Bert: The Movie. When you beat the game, they're all joined together for the full 'movie', in which Q*Bert fights a tree.

QBILLION

Year Publisher Developer 1990 SETA Corporation SETA Corporation



QBILLION IS A puzzle game that can be very difficult to get your head around. You play as Mr Mouse, who apparently isn't a big fan of stacked blocks. Unfortunately for him, each of the game's stages contains a bunch of them, so it's up to you to remove the stacks. Mr Mouse can push around single blocks, and can use these to stand next to stacks and topple them over. A three-stack block can only be toppled from a two-stack block and other such complications, meaning if you can't picture the scenario from a side-on perspective in your brain the whole thing can be tricky. There's also a tic-tactoe style Game B, which adds even more rules in case you're Mensa-grade. ■

FACT

Qbillion has an Edit mode which lets you make your own puzzles. Though this does of course mean you then have to give your Game Boy to a friend and try to explain how to play the game.

QIX

Year Publisher Developer

1990 Nintendo Minakuchi Engineering

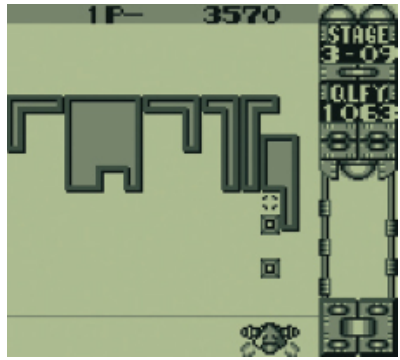
ORIGINALLY RELEASED IN arcades in 1981, Qix is a minimalist action game where the aim is to colour in your screen by 'claiming' it, chunk by chunk. You play as a small marker, which can be used to draw lines across the screen. If you can draw out a rectangular area, that area becomes filled in and claimed. The problem is, there are enemies moving around, including small Sparx and the giant Qix, and if these touch you or your line while you're drawing it you'll lose a life. The game is based on risk/reward, then, because you can get more points for claiming larger sections at a time, but doing this leaves your line exposed for longer periods. ■

FACT

Qix was designed by Randy and Sandy Pfeiffer, easily the most influential 'husband and wife with rhyming names' couple in the history of video game development.

QUARTH

Year 1990
Publisher Ultra Games
Developer Konami



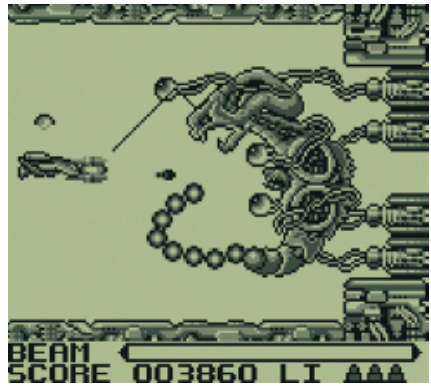
ANOTHER ARCADE GAME given the Game Boy treatment, Konami's Quarth is an interesting mix of Tetris and vertical shoot 'em ups. Large falling blocks slowly descend towards your ship, but this isn't any old spaceship armed with guns that can blow them away. Instead, you're controlling a Blockbuster, a special ship that can only shoot small single blocks. In order to remove the falling blocks, you have to shoot your single blocks at them, adding to their shape. Once a block has been built into a full square or rectangle, it disappears. Naturally, as the game progresses the blocks fall faster, making the game more difficult and making it more likely that they'll reach the bottom of the screen, at which point you'll be 'Quarthed'. ■

FACT

The manual says 'if you think Quarth is a mineral that comes from the ground, you're in for a rude awakening!' If you actually were thinking that, you're thinking of quartz.

R-TYPE

Year 1991
Publisher Irem
Developer Bits Studios



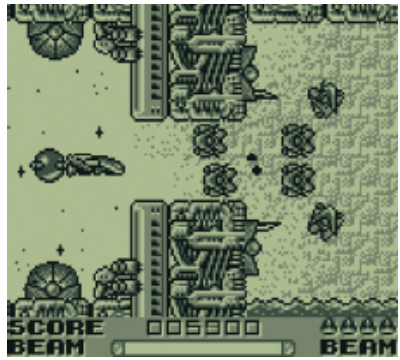
ONE OF THE most iconic (and notoriously difficult) arcade shoot ‘em ups of the ‘80s, R-Type has you piloting the R-9 Arrowhead ship as you attempt to put a stop to the evil Bydo Empire alien race from taking over the Earth. The game’s main gimmick is the Force, known as the Power Pod in the Game Boy version, which is a small pod that can either be bolted to the front or back of your ship for special firepower, or sent off to float around on its own, where it continues to shoot every time you do. The Game Boy version was commended for how faithfully it recreated the far more powerful arcade game, though it does drop the fourth and fifth stages. ■

FACT

Although they were told they couldn’t be credited, programmer Jas Austin and artist Mak Jones sneaked their names into the game by adding them to the list of technical specs for the R-9.

R-TYPE II

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Irem Bits Studios



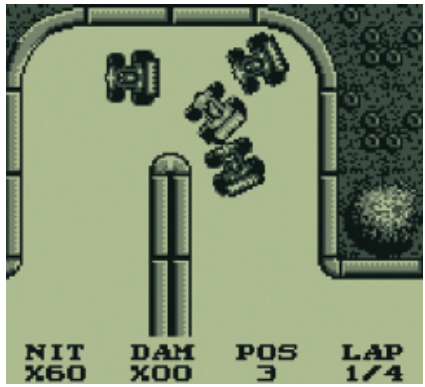
THE SECOND ARCADE game in the R-Type series is generally believed to be inferior to the original, due to less inspired boss designs, a lack of innovation and the difficulty level rising even higher than before. These complaints can all arguably be levelled at the Game Boy port too, which delivers a reasonably accurate recreation (although, as before, it doesn't have all the levels: it's missing the fourth stage of six, in this case). Even more than the original, the sequel is often pretty cheap when it comes to the placement of enemies – this was very much a game designed to kill players quickly so they'd insert more coins in the arcades – and despite the move to Game Boy this hasn't been dialled back much.

FACT

Jas Austin had moved on to other projects so couldn't port R-Type II to Game Boy like he did with the first. Instead, it was handled by Bob Pape, who had previously ported R-Type to the Spectrum.

RACE DAYS

Year	1994
Publisher	GameTek
Developer	Gremlin Graphics



THIS IS A compilation cartridge consisting of two separate racing games. The first, Dirty Racing, was previously only available in Japan and is a top-down racer where you take on three opponents in a series of races, collecting money to upgrade your car along the way and ignoring the ever-soslight sexual undertones of the game's general presentation. The second is 4 Wheel Drive: this is actually the previously released Jeep Jamboree: Off Road Adventure with the Jeep licensing removed, meaning it features exactly the same firstperson off-road racing experience. While Race Days was released in both North America and Europe, it's the latter that got the most out of it, because neither game had been released in Europe before. ■

FACT

The opponents in Dirty Racing were called Joe Tanabe, Dug Scram and Sly Rash in Japan, but the western version changed these to Slug Wannabe, Dug Outscram and… um, Sly Ratgash.

RACE DRIVIN'

Year 1993
Publisher THQ
Developer Argonaut Games

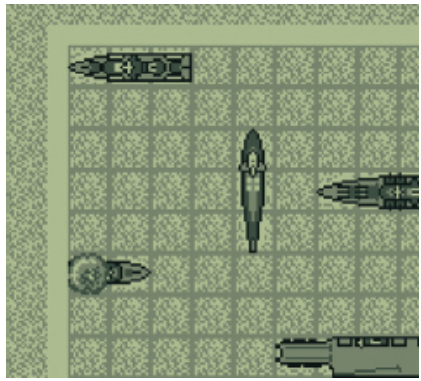
THE SORT OF port that it's frankly astounding anyone even attempted, Race Drivin' is the arcade sequel to Hard Drivin', both of which were known for their early use of polygonal 3D graphics. The Game Boy version of Race Drivin' contains all four cars (the first game's car in both automatic and manual transmission, and manual speedster and roadsters) and all three tracks (Stunt, Super Stunt and Autocross), and just like the arcade version it focuses on realism, with players having to pay close attention to their speed when approaching each hazard. The frame rate is low and the crash replays have been removed but it's still astonishing to see how close Argonaut got to the original on the humble Game Boy. ■

FACT

Argonaut's mastery of polygonal graphics would of course get far more attention just months later with the arrival of Star Fox on the SNES and its Argonaut-designed Super FX chip.

RADAR MISSION

Year Publisher Developer 1991 Nintendo Nintendo



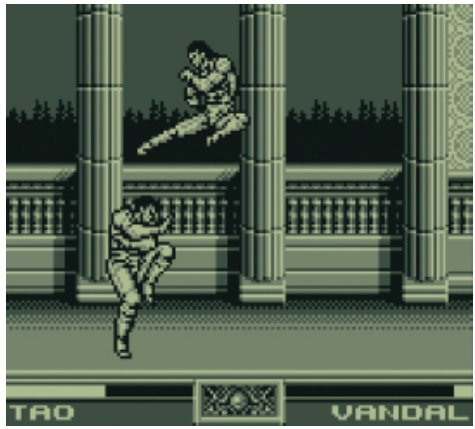
RADAR MISSION IS a(nother) video game interpretation of Battleship, with a few improvements. As in the board game, you have to place your ships on a grid, then you and your opponent take turns firing missiles to try and hit each other's vessels. New gimmicks include a 'near miss' feature, where the game makes a sound if you miss an opponent by a single space, and a Lucky Shot, where you can gain power-ups by hitting certain spaces. There's also a Game B, which has you using a periscope to shoot enemies, as well as a two-player mode which Shigeru Miyamoto once said was the game's best feature (he said it 'never really took off ' because it was 'so plain'). ■

FACT

A couple of the planes had their designs slightly tweaked for the western version, so they didn't look so much like Japanese WWII fighter planes.

RAGING FIGHTER

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Konami Konami



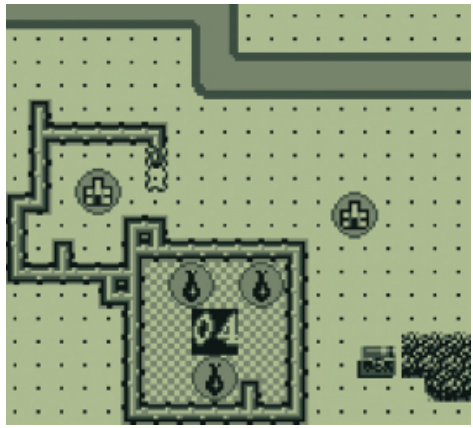
KONAMI'S ATTEMPT TO muscle its way into the handheld fighting game scene was Raging Fighter, a oneon- one scrapper with your typical array of musclebound melee masters. As well as a practice mode and a 'Tournament' mode (which is a standard arcade mode as seen in Street Fighter and the like), there's also a Story mode where you have a team of three fighters and have to use them to defeat a series of opponents, with your energy bar carrying over to the next fight each time. Despite the Game Boy only having two attack buttons, Raging Fighter lets players perform different punches and kicks by pressing Left or Right on the D-Pad as they press each button, meaning move lists are still reasonably varied. ■

FACT

The game has a twoplayer Link Cable mode, which the box (slightly hyperbolically) claims will let you 'inflict unforgettable pain on a friend'.

RAMPART

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Jaleco Jaleco



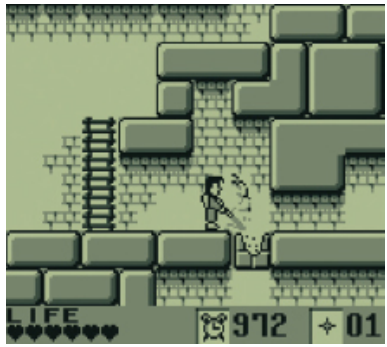
ONE OF THE early ancestors of the tower defence genre, Rampart has you trying to defend your castles from a series of attacks by an oncoming enemy force. The game alternates between two phases: in the defend phase, you have to use your cannons to shoot down the enemy sea and land units as they fire at your ramparts. After a set time you then switch to the repair phase where you have a limited time to place Tetris-like blocks on your battlefield to replace the walls your enemy destroyed. If you can't place enough blocks to fully enclose one of your castles before the time runs out, it's Game Over. The Game Boy version adds the ability to choose from three generals, each with different power and defence stats. ■

FACT

The Japanese version has more of a fantasy theme, replacing the enemy soldiers with wizards and animated skulls.

THE REAL GHOSTBUSTERS

Year 1993
Publisher Activision
Developer Kotobuki Systems



THE CONVOLUTED RENAMING and rebranding shenanigans of Kemco's Crazy Castle series has already been seen numerous times in this book, and The Real Ghostbusters is yet another example. This is a reskinned version of what's known in Japan as Mickey Mouse IV, and in Europe as Garfield Labyrinth. Naturally, the story is wafer-thin given it wasn't originally a Ghostbusters game: playing as Peter Venkman, you have to escape a haunted house, and that's about it. You do this by collecting 'Spirit Stars', which unlock the doors in each stage. Given the original source material you don't get to use your trusty Ghostbuster gadgetry like your Proton Pak or ghost traps: instead you defeat your ghostly enemies with good oldfashioned bombs. ■

FACT

It's quite fitting that this and Garfield Labyrinth are reskins of each other, given that voice actor Lorenzo Music played both Garfield and Peter Venkman in their respective cartoons.

THE REN & STIMPY SHOW: SPACE CADET ADVENTURES

Year Publisher Developer 1992 THQ Imagineering

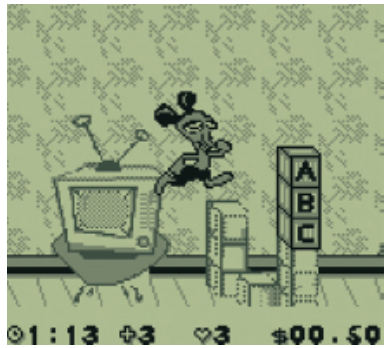
THE FIRST OF two Game Boy games based on the Nickelodeon cartoon series Ren & Stimpy, Space Cadet Adventures plays very similarly to another Imagineering game, the equally difficult Adventures of Rocky & Bullwinkle. This platformer sees Ren getting lost in space following a failed space-walk and takes place over four stages. In the first, you play as Stimpy, as he tries to reach the escape hatch in his spaceship. Then you switch to Ren as he explores an alien planet he's landed on. Next it's back to Stimpy as he explores a toilet-based planet, before you finally play as Ren one more time as he looks through an intergalactic trailer park for his pal. Each plays similarly, except Ren can slap and Stimpy spits hairballs. ■

FACT

The game is based on numerous episodes of the show in which the pair explore space as astronauts Commander Hoek and Cadet Stimpy.

THE REN & STIMPY SHOW: VEEDIOTS!

Year	*Publisher*	*Developer*
1993	THQ	Eastridge Technology



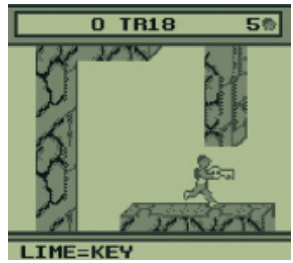
REN AND STIMPY have been trapped inside their own TV show (how meta), so it's up to the player to help them escape. There are three levels in total, each based on an episode from the show: in The Boy Who Cried Rat, Ren has to avoid Stimpy the ratcatcher while dressed as a rat. In Stimpy's Invention, Stimpy has to explore his laboratory, finding pieces of a 'happy helmet' for Ren to wear. Finally, In the Army has Ren trying to get from one end of a hazardous battlefield to the other. Veediots! is a port of a SNES game, but is missing a number of features. the SNES version included a fourth spacebased stage called Marooned, for example.

FACT

An episode in the show's second series, 'Man's Best Friend', was banned by Nickelodeon before it even aired (due to excessive violence). It first aired more than a decade later on SpikeTV.

THE RESCUE OF PRINCESS BLOBETTE

Year 1991
Publisher Absolute Entertainment
Developer / Nintendo Imagineering



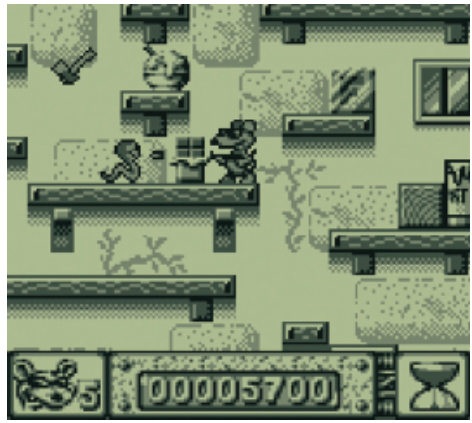
THIS IS THE sequel to the NES puzzle platform game A Boy and His Blob. The story here goes that Princess Blobette has been kidnapped by the 'anatagonistic alchemist' of Blobolonia', who wants to take over Blobolonia and become its emperor. Conscious that the unnamed Boy and his friend Blob from the first game defeated the previous evil Emperor, the alchemist locks the pair in his castle's tower. Thus begins your adventure. As in the original A Boy and His Blob, the central gameplay mechanic here is the ability to toss jellybeans into the Blob's mouth to turn him into various objects. A tangerine bean will turn him into a trampoline, for example, while a lime bean turns him into a key (as in key lime pie). ■

FACT

There are two jellybeans new to the Game Boy sequel. The mint bean turns Blob into ice, while the Banana bean turns him into a monkey wrench.

RESERVOIR RAT

Year 1999
Publisher Take-Two Interactive
Developer Tarantula Studios



KEEN TO LEAVE a life of crime behind him, Mr Rez – a rat who used to be a paid assassin – runs away to get married with the love of his life, Loretta Mozzarella. The only problem is, Loretta's dad happens to be the head of the rodent world's criminal underbelly, so he asks his ratty goons to kidnap his daughter and bring her home, while giving Mr Rez a kicking for good measure. Not one to shirk from a shootout, Mr Rez heads out to rescue Loretta in a lengthy adventure taking in 75 stages. As well as gunning down any enemies in his way, Mr Rez also has to eat all the food in each stage, as this is what opens the exit door to the next level. ■

FACT

The game's music is a not-so-subtle knock-off of the Peter Gunn theme from *The Blues Brothers*, with only the odd wrong note thrown in here or there to presumably avoid the lawyers.

RIDDICK BOWE BOXING

Year 1994
Publisher Extreme Entertainment / GameTek
Developer Equilibrium

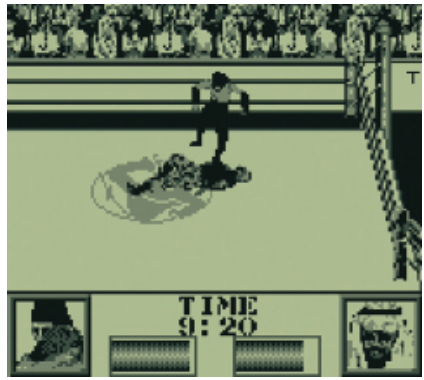
ALSO RELEASED ON the SNES, Riddick Bowe Boxing was the latest in a series of visually and mechanically similar boxing games developed by Malibu Interactive (formally Acme Interactive). As in those that came before it, the game is played with a side-on viewpoint and maps the left and right hands to the B and A buttons respectively. By moving your boxer's stance between high and low and holding the D-Pad in certain directions while pressing either button you can pull off a variety of different punches. You can either fight as Bowe himself in Exhibition matches or create your own boxer and fight your way through the rankings to reach him, taking on such fictional foes as Loco Lopez, Mick Corleone and Robin Coltrain. ■

FACT

If you beat Bowe in career mode, he gives you the confusing message: 'Here's the man that beat the man, who beat the man. That makes you the man.' Um, thanks.

RING RAGE

Year 1998
Publisher Natsume
Developer Taito



THIS IS A heavily watered down version of a Taito arcade game of the same name. Ring Rage is a wrestling game which looks similar to Atari's Pit-Fighter, in that it uses digitised actors as its characters. There are five to choose from in the Game Boy version – Austrian wrestler Gunboat Rody, New York grappler Spike, Japanese karate expert Yasha, Middle Eastern fighter Shadam and San Francisco kickboxer KO Joe. After picking one you have to defeat the others in a series of fights until you reach the title fight against the unplayable boss, Killer Cane. Whereas the arcade mode had tag team fights and a Battle Royale mode where you fight each other in the streets, the Game Boy version is strictly one-on-one, in the ring affairs. ■

FACT

The Game Boy version is also missing three arcade fighters: Texas wrestler BB Scorpion, Hong Kong martial arts pro Kelly Deckerd and another New Yorker called Knuckle.

ROAD RASH

Year 1994
Publisher Ocean
Developer The Code Monkeys

EA'S POPULAR MOTORBIKE racing game may never have made it to the SNES, but Nintendo fans didn't go entirely portfree. This Game Boy take manages to encapsulate the 16-bit version despite a visual downgrade: playing as a racer you name yourself, you have to race through five different environments against a group of other bikers. The main twist is that if you find yourself racing alongside one of your opponents, you can move over and attempt to punch them off their bike. Naturally, you can also be knocked off your vehicle, and rather than simply respawning after your lengthy slide across the dirt, you have to manually control your character as you shamefully run to your downed bike. A decent port. ■

FACT

Dan Geisler, who co-designed and co-programmed the original Mega Drive version, once claimed he wanted to make Sega's Hang-On obsolete with Road Rash, and feels that he succeeded.

ROBIN HOOD: PRINCE OF THIEVES

Year Publisher Developer

1993 Virgin Interactive Bits Studios

A SOLID RENDITION of the NES game released to tie in with the Kevin Costner and Alan Rickman movie of the same name. Playing as Robin of Locksley, you have to escape prison and put an end to the dubious deeds of the Sheriff of Nottingham. Most of the game is played from a top-down perspective and is a mixture of action (when you battle enemies) and adventure (you can bring up a menu to search, talk, use items and the like). On occasion the game will switch to a side-on mode when you have one-on-one sword duels with certain enemies, and for larger scale battles the action will zoom out (though this is the one area where the Game Boy version struggles to match the NES). ■

FACT

There's a piece of paper on the floor of the Druids Cave which contains longer credits for the game, complete with jokey comments about the developers.

ROBOCOP

Year Publisher Developer 1990 Ocean Ocean

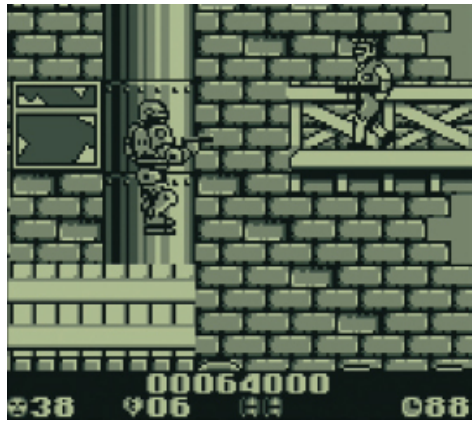
THE GAME BOY version of RoboCop isn't based on the NES game (in which RoboCop annoyingly couldn't jump). Instead, it's a port of the version released on home computers including the C64, ZX Spectrum and Amstrad CPC. Playing as the future of law enforcement himself, you have to make your way through five stages – two patrols in the streets of Detroit, a gang's hideout, the OCP headquarters and a deserted junkyard – gunning down any criminal scum that gets in your way. In between these stages are separate mini-games: a lightgun style game where you have to take out a criminal while avoiding their hostage, and one where you plug into a police computer and have to create a photofit for a suspect. ■

FACT

The game's title music was used in a TV commercial for Ariston kitchen appliances, and was chosen by satirist Charlie Brooker as one of his eight tracks in BBC radio show *Desert Island Discs*.

ROBOCOP 2

Year	*Publisher*	*Developer*
1991	Ocean	Painting by Numbers



THE SECOND ROBOCOP game is, naturally, based on the second movie, and has RoboCop trying to clean up the streets of Detroit by wiping out a deadly new drug called Nuke. The game offers similar run and gun action to its predecessor, but this time you can also find a jetpack in some stages. You also now have to arrest a set number of criminals in each stage, but only the 'arrestable' ones, which it turns out means the ones who are on their knees screaming because they're on Nuke. The Game Boy version also includes the most depressing sliding puzzle mini-game of all time, in which you have to rearrange tiles to complete a photo of RoboCop's wife and son so they aren't deleted from his memory. ■

FACT

During one scene in the *RoboCop 2* movie, RoboCop fights criminals in an arcade filled with Data East games.

ROBOCOP VS THE TERMINATOR

Year	1994
Publisher	Interplay
Developer	Unexpected Development

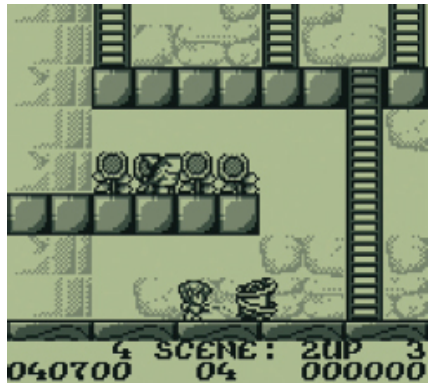
IN THE FUTURE (according to the Terminator movies), Cyberdyne Systems will create Skynet, a defence system which will eventually become self-aware and destroy mankind. It turns out Skynet was modelled after RoboCop's neural networks, so the human rebellion sends back a soldier called Flo to destroy RoboCop, while Skynet sends a bunch of Terminators back to stop her. It all gets quite complex but the game (which plays similarly to the previous Game Boy RoboCop titles) has you gunning down enemies in the present on your way to the OCP office complex, where RoboCop – realising he's responsible for the death of humanity – sends himself to the future and fights through post-apocalyptic future LA to bring down the Skynet Control Computer. ■

FACT

A cheat code can be entered to 'skip' the game's last level and see a hidden office where the game's artist Lauren Axelrod and programmer Cary Hammer are working at their desks.

ROD LAND

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Storm Eurocom



ROD LAND IS an arcade platformer that you'd be easily forgiven for thinking was part of Taito's Bubble Bobble and Rainbow Island series but is actually unrelated. A pair of fairies called Tam and Rit are shocked when a monster kidnaps their mother and takes them to the top of the Maboots Tower. Grabbing their special 'Rods of Sheesanomo', the pair head out to rescue their mum: because let's face it, it would be a bit out of order if they didn't. The wands can be used to attack enemies: one hit stuns them, and you can then use the wand to grab them and smash them repeatedly onto the ground until they're defeated. Your fairy can also make ladders appear, to make it easier to navigate the stage. ■

FACT

The Game Boy version is slightly easier than the arcade original because Tam and Rit can use their wands on ladders, whereas in the arcade version they're vulnerable.

ROGER CLEMENS' MVP BASEBALL

Year 1992
Publisher LJN
Developer Sculptured Software

ACCLAIM'S BASEBALL GAME (released under its LJN brand) features all 26 teams in the MLB but neither the team names nor the player names are official: except that of Roger Clemens, of course. This means you've got the likes of Detroit Wheels, Baltimore Eagles and Cleveland Tomahawks instead of their officially licensed counterparts. Somewhat disappointingly, the Game Boy version also has different 'fake' rosters: although the player names are fake in other versions, there was at least an attempt to let players figure out which real-life players they represent. In other versions, for example, Cleveland's Sandomar, Brookby and Carga are clearly meant to be Sandy Alomar, Brook Jacoby and Carlos Baerga, but in the Game Boy version the names are completely different. ■

FACT

The game plays the US national anthem before each match, even if you choose to play as two Canadian teams. There would be riots, if Canadians weren't so darned polite.

ROLAN'S CURSE

Year Publisher Developer 1991 American Sammy NMK

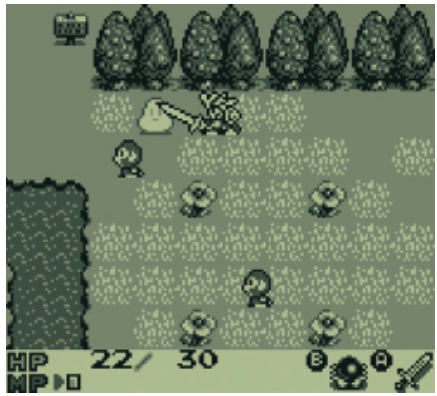
THE PEACEFUL LAND of Rolan used to be terrorised by the evil King Barius, until he was eventually overthrown and imprisoned in his own castle, with a magical seal slapped on the door warning not to let him out. Naturally, one day a group of weary travellers enter the castle looking for shelter and accidentally free Barius, who it turns out is a demon and immediately turns the travellers into monsters. As an unnamed hero, you have to defeat Barius by exploring Rolan's countryside, castles and caverns. For the most part Rolan's Curse plays like one of the early Zelda games, but it does have an interesting gimmick in that two players can link their Game Boys together and play the game in co-op, exploring the world together. ■

FACT

Don't get your hopes up for a powerful ending: Rolan's Curse ends with a couple of text screens simply saying Barius is 'no more' and that 'peace rules once again'.

ROLAN'S CURSE 2

Year 1992
Publisher American Sammy
Developer NMK



IF YOU'RE LOOKING for some sort of elaborate explanation as to why King Barius might be able to return after being destroyed in the first Rolan's Curse, you won't get it here: he's back, and you just have to come to terms with it. Rolan's Curse 2 ditches the two-player co-op mode from the first game, making this a strictly solo affair. That's not to say your hero will be going it alone, however: this time you come across seven different would-be companions on your travels, and can recruit up to three of them to join your party. You only control one character at a time, but can pause to swap to another one whenever you like. Each has special abilities: Pit, for example, can blow up barriers with bombs. ■

FACT

In Japan, the games are known as Beriosu and Beriosu 2. This is the Japanese name for 'Barius', meaning in Japan the series is named after the villain, not the land.

THE RUGRATS MOVIE

Year 1998 *Publisher* THQ *Developer* Software Creations

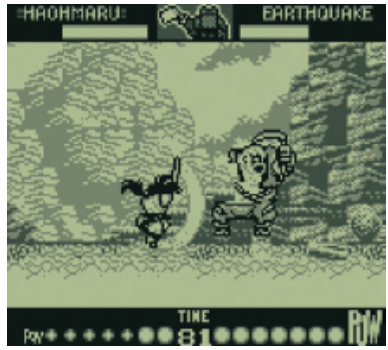
THE RUGRATS MOVIE was released in cinemas in November 1998 and introduced fans to Dil, the new baby brother of main protagonist Tommy Pickles. No sooner have we met Dil than he disappears, however, meaning it's up to the Rugrats to head off on an adventure to get him back. Playing as Tommy, Chuckie, Phil and Lil, you have to make your way through eight stages including such locations as the Pickles residence, the hospital (where Dil is born), a wrecked circus train in a forest, the woods and an ancient ruin. Most of these stages are typical platforming affairs, but two stages switch the action to an overhead racing game style, as you drive the Reptar Wagon while avoiding obstacles. ■

FACT

E. G. Daily voiced Tommy in the original series, the movie and the 2021 Paramount+ reboot. She once recorded a Tommy voice acting session while she was in the middle of labour.

SAMURAI SHODOWN

Year Publisher Developer 1994 Takara Takara



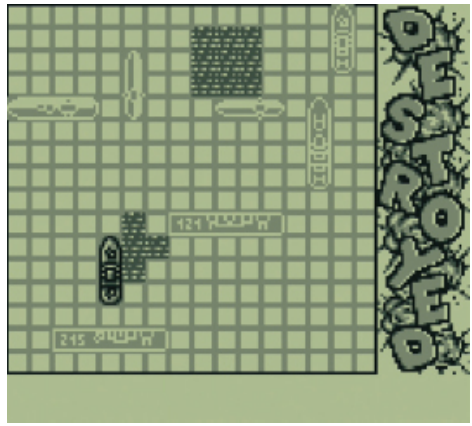
MUCH LIKE TAKARA'S other Game Boy ports of SNK arcade fighting games, Samurai Shodown is a cut-down version that isn't half-hearted, but does its best with the resources available to it. Like its coinop counterpart, it's a oneon- one fighting game with a heavy emphasis on weaponsbased combat, with players able to do massive damage to their opponents with certain well-placed weapon attacks. Whereas many other Game Boy fighting game ports have their rosters cut (see Mortal Kombat and Street Fighter II), Samurai Shodown has every single character from the arcade version presented and accounted for. What's more, it even has two exclusive hidden characters Kuroko (the judge who grades the fights) and Hiyaku (a delivery man who usually throws in items during fights). ■

FACT

If Kuroko fights Kuroko, the pre-fight dialogue says: 'Are you also one who is searching for the answer? Or are you one who has the'. The final word, 'answer', is cut out.

SEA BATTLE

Year Publisher Developer 1998 Infogrames Bit Managers



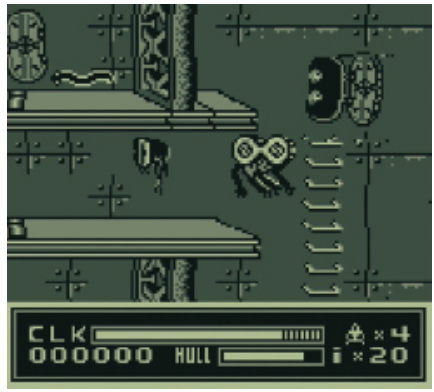
ANOTHER OF THE apparent multitude of Battleship clones on the Game Boy, the Europe-exclusive Sea Battle is perhaps one of the more accomplished efforts. There are four modes available here: Standard Game is a straightforward port of Battleship, while Extra Game lets you change the size of the playing field from the standard 12x12 to either 8x8 or 16x16. Then there's Battle Game, an advanced take in which you select a fleet of ships, each with their own abilities (such as triple shots, powerful shots that cover multiple squares and the like). Finally, Super Battle Game is similar to Battle Game but it adds little cutscene animations every time you fire a shot, to make the thing a bit more cinematic (and slower). ■

FACT

The game's box doesn't shy away from its inspiration, claiming it's 'the hottest sea battle since Battleship was created'.

SEAQUEST DSV

Year 1994
Publisher Malibu Games
Developer Unexpected Development



BASED ON THE NBC underwater sci-fi TV show, the Game Boy version of seaQuest DSV was a very different game to the one released on the SNES and Genesis. While the console versions were a mix of isometric exploration scenes and side-on mission scenes, the Game Boy version is a series of seven missions that use a variety of the seaQuest submarine's utility vessels. One minute you're using a Hyper-Reality Probe to recover plutonium canisters from a sunken cargo cruiser, the next you're a diver collecting plutonium canisters from a cavern, or piloting a small speeder vessel to… um, gather plutonium canisters from an underwater weapons facility. Basically, as long as plutonium canisters are involved, you can bet your gills the seaQuest squad are on it. ■

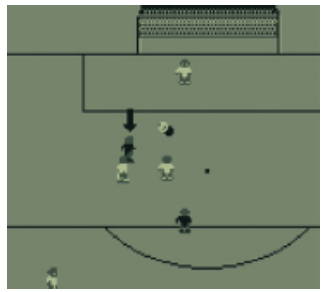
FACT

Unused text found in the game's code makes reference to a 'special contest screen' and asks players to send a photo of the screen to enter. There never was a contest.

SENSIBLE SOCCER: EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Sony Imagesoft Sensible

Software



WIDELY BELIEVED BY a certain generation of players (mostly based in Europe) to be the best arcade-style football game ever made, Sensible Soccer began life on the Amiga but was ported to a number of other computers and consoles. The Game Boy port is a relatively faithful conversion, making use of the handheld's two buttons to provide separate pass and shoot controls rather than the catch-all single-button control system of the original version. Player names are fake but easy enough to figure out because of a simple vowel swap (so Giggs and Cantona become Goggs and Centona), but the real setback is that there are far fewer teams in this version than any other: just 20 club teams and 20 national teams. ■

FACT

Sensible Soccer designer Jon Hare released a spiritual successor in recent years in the shape of Sociable Soccer, an Apple Arcade game which was eventually ported to PC and consoles.

SERPENT

Year 1990 *Publisher* Taxan *Developer* Dual

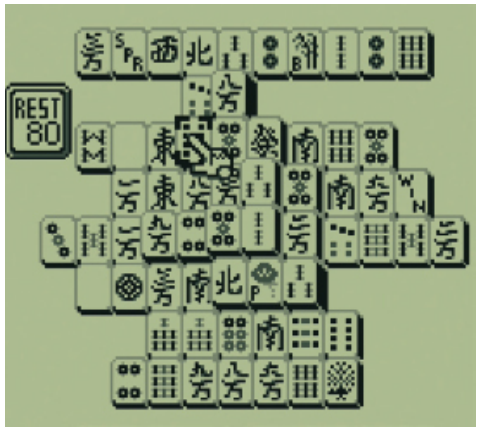
IMAGINE, IF YOU will, a version of the old Nokia game Snake, but with two players competing on the same screen. Now imagine it's got some hokey plot attached to it in which you're taking part in a futuristic sport where competitors pilot giant robot snake vehicle things. You've just imagined Serpent, you clever sod. Naturally, given the lose conditions in Snake, the aim here is to cut off your opponent and block their route so they bump into either your snake or their own tail and can no longer move. The game has multiple difficulty levels, affecting the speed of the game and whether players can reverse their snake (meaning you have to block off both their head and their tail to win). ■

FACT

Serpent takes itself quite seriously. When you get Game Over you get an animation of a snake crying, along with the message 'the bitter taste of defeat'.

SHANGHAI

Year Publisher Developer 1990 Sunsoft Sunsoft



OTHERWISE KNOWN AS mahjong solitaire, Shanghai is an engaging puzzle game which makes use of mahjong tiles. The tiles are laid out in a specific way (which is supposed to represent a dragon), and the player has to clear the table by removing matching pairs of tiles. The twist is that you can only move a tile if it can be freely slid away to the side and removed (which means if there are tiles at its left and right side, it's stuck and can't be moved). If you run out of possible matches, it's Game Over. If the design of the mahjong tiles is a little confusing for your western eyes to parse, there's also the option to replace them with letters and numbers. ■

FACT

Before it came to the Game Boy, Sunsoft released Shanghai on the Famicom in 1987. It was much harder because the tiles weren't shown at an angle, making it harder to tell how high each stack was.

SHAQ FU

Year 1995
Publisher Black Pearl Software
Developer Unexpected Development

WHILE VISITING A dojo during a trip to Japan, Shaquille O'Neal learns about an alternate dimension called the Second World, where a young lad called Nezu is being held captive by an evil mummy called Sett Ra. Not one to let such tomfoolery fly, Shaq agrees to travel through a portal to rescue Nezu. The console version of Shaq Fu is one of those games that the internet has retrospectively decided was one of the worst games of all time, even though in reality it was simply average. The Game Boy port is based on the SNES version, which had seven characters to choose from (versus 12 on the Mega Drive / Genesis). All seven SNES characters do at least make the jump to the Game Boy version. ■

FACT

While there's no Link Cable two-player mode, if you plug the game into a Super Game Boy it unlocks a two-player mode which can be played with two SNES controllers.

SIDE POCKET

Year Publisher Developer

1990 Data East / Nintendo
Data East

ORIGINALLY RELEASED IN arcades by Data East in 1986, Side Pocket is a take on 9-Ball pool but with a singleplayer twist. In the game's main Pocket Game mode, you start off at Club Class level and have to earn a certain amount of points to move onto the next level. You earn points by potting balls, with bonus points for potting balls in a row without missing or for potting them in numerical order. You only have a certain amount of shots, though, meaning you have to earn the required number of points within your shot count. For those who aren't into such novelty, the game also includes a standard 9-Ball Pool mode for one or two players, though the lack of colour does affect the experience somewhat. ■

FACT

Side Pocket got an arcade spin-off in Japan called Pocket Gal, in which you played against women who would strip if you won. The western version, Super Pool III, removed the stripping.

THE SIMPSONS: BART & THE BEANSTALK

Year	*Publisher*	*Developer*
1994	Acclaim	Software Creations

THIS RATHER UNUSUAL game tells the story of Jack and the Beanstalk, with Jack replaced by Bart Simpson. After Bart is tricked into buying magic beans from Mr Burns, they're tossed into the garden and grow into a huge beanstalk overnight. Thus begins a seven-stage platform game in which Bart has to climb the beanstalk, enter the giant's castle, steal his three prized possessions – a bag of gold, a magic harp and a goose that lays golden eggs – then carefully make his way back down the beanstalk while being chased by the giant (who's a massive angry Homer, naturally). The gameplay is standard platformer fare in which Bart can use his trusty slingshot to defeat enemies, which mostly consist of bugs and other woodland creatures. ■

FACT

If you're a sucker for cheat codes that spell out words, the level select code is Right, A, Down, B, A, Down, Left, A, Down, which spells out 'RAD BAD LAD'.

THE SIMPSONS: BART VS THE JUGGERNAUTS

Year 1992
Publisher Acclaim
Developer Imagineering

THIS MINI-GAME COMPILATION is a parody of the *American Gladiators* TV show, in which Bart has to take on Springfield's equivalent, Juggernauts. The game consists of four separate 'episodes' of the show, and in each Bart has to take on a series of events to try and win enough money to qualify for the next episode. Events include the Nuclear Plant Bop 'Til You Drop (which is the same as the classic *Gladiators* event Joust but with plutonium rods), Herman's Military Minefield Mayhem (where you parachute from the roof of Springfield Arena then navigate a literal minefield) and Captain Murdock's Skateboard Bash and Crash (where you skate along an obstacle course then jump off a ramp and kick a Juggernaut off a pedestal). ■

FACT

If you can knock female Juggernaut Snarla out of the ring in the Moe's Tavern Shove Fest event, you then have to take on Moe's resident champion, Barney Gumble.

THE SIMPSONS: ITCHY & SCRATCHY IN MINIATURE GOLF MADNESS

Year 1994
Publisher Acclaim
Developer Beam Software

THIS UNUSUAL LITTLE game is part miniature golf game, part action platformer. Scratchy has headed out for a relaxing day of mini-golf, but Itchy has other plans and has booby-trapped the course with pits and hazards. The aim, then, is to avoid these obstacles and attack Itchy any time you see him on the course, all while still actually trying to get your ball in the hole within a set number of shots. There are nine holes (i.e. stages) to play through, and while things can be a bit overwhelming at first given the game is juggling two separate genres, eventually Scratchy finds weapons – such as boomerangs, grenades and a ray gun – which can make things a bit easier. ■

FACT

The holes have suitably punny titles, such as 9½ Shrieks, Grim Furry Tales and I Scream of Genie. They aren't all winners, though (20,000 Mice Under the Sea).

SKATE OR DIE: BAD N RAD

Year Publisher Developer 1990 Konami Konami

THE TOWN OF Vileville, found just west of California, is in shock after the kidnapping of Miss Aerial, the resident Roller Queen. She's been taken by ElRad the Evil One and his skateboarding goon Bionic Lester, so it's up to you – as Miss Aerial's love interest and the best skater in town – to get her back. While the first Skate or Die (and its spin-off Ski or Die) was more of a series of mini-game events, Bad N Rad is an action game in which you skate your way through seven stages. Four of these are side-scrolling platformer affairs, while the other three are vertically scrolling obstacle courses where you have to reach the end within a certain time. Bosses include the descriptivelynamed Berserk Not-So-Happy Clown. ■

FACT

In 2002, Burnout studio Criterion Games started work on a new Skate or Die game for the PS2 and Xbox. It was scrapped after a year and Criterion moved onto Burnout 3 instead.

SKATE OR DIE: TOUR DE THRASH

Year 1991
Publisher EA Sports
Developer Realtime Associates

THE SECOND SKATE or Die title on Game Boy ditches the ‘rescue the damsel in distress’ storyline in favour of a more skateboard-friendly ‘be good at skating’ one. The main mode here is the Stale Fish Tour, where you have to skate down lengthy half-pipe stages in eight areas – LA, Las Vegas, Chernobyl, Hanoi, Baghdad, the Panama Canal, Easter Island and Atlantis – with the aim being to reach the end of the course before time runs out. Stunts aren’t necessary in this mode, but if you’re more into tricks than travel the second mode, the Retro- Rocket Ramp, may be more your jam. This is a (Santa Cruz sponsored) half pipe where you simply go back and forth, pulling off as many tricks as you can.

FACT

The manual opens with the phrase ‘yer bird is leaving, dude’, which means ‘your plane is taking off’ and not the more upsetting meaning it would have in the UK.

SMALL SOLDIERS

Year 1998
Publisher THQ
Developer Tiertex Design Studios

SMALL SOLDIERS IS based on DreamWorks' action comedy in which toy soldiers come to life and start a war. While there was a PlayStation tie-in which was set in a fantasy world and treated the toys like actual real-life characters, this Game Boy title is a completely separate game that's somewhat more faithful to the film in that it's still set in the real world. You play as Archer, the leader of the Gorgonites, and it's your job to return to your clan then team up with human friend Alan to take on the Commando Elite led by Chip Hazard. The game is a side-scrolling action platformer in which Archer's mission takes him through a toy shop, a back alley and a house. ■

FACT

There's an unfinished level tucked away in the game's code. It takes place in a bathroom, and can be accessed using a cheat cartridge like a Game Genie.

THE SMURFS

Year 1994 *Publisher* Infogrames *Developer* Bit Managers

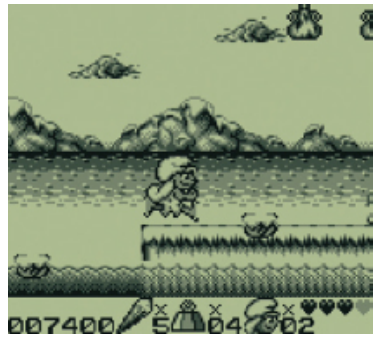
THERE WERE THREE Game Boy games based on The Smurfs, but only the first one made it to North America. The evil sorcerer Gargamel has decided to 'smurf all Smurfs' (according to the game), and has already smurfnapped Brainy Smurf, Jokey Smurf and Smurfette. Playing as Hefty Smurf, you have to smurf your way through exactly smurf stages (by which I mean twelve) taking in the likes of a forest, the River Smurf, a gold mine, a volcano and Gargamel's manor home. There were two versions of the game: the original European release features support for five languages, while the second version – available in Europe and North America – removes Spanish support but adds (very basic) Super Game Boy support. ■

FACT

The volcano stage ends long before its music does, meaning about half of the melody can never be heard by playing the game normally.

THE SMURFS 2: THE SMURFS TRAVEL THE WORLD

Year 1995
Publisher Infogrames
Developer Infogrames



ONE NIGHT AT the Smurf Village, Inquisitive Smurf (who's only ever seen in this game) and Smurfette sneak into Papa Smurf 's lab to see the Magic Crystal, which lets them teleport to anywhere in the world. Smurfette breaks the thing, and the pair disappear off to parts unknown. Playing as either Inquisitive Smurf or Smurfette, you have to explore Africa, the North Pole, Asia, North America, South America and Australia and collect the small shards of crystal dotted around each stage. Only by collecting enough shards can you repair the crystal and return back to the Smurf Village, presumably with the added knowledge that you shouldn't smurf with Papa Smurf 's stuff. ■

FACT

The game is based on the cartoon's ninth season, in which the Smurfs' adventures no longer took place in their own village and instead took place around the world thanks to the crystal.

THE SMURFS 3: THE SMURFS' NIGHTMARE

Year	*Publisher*	*Developer*
1997	Infogrames	Infogrames

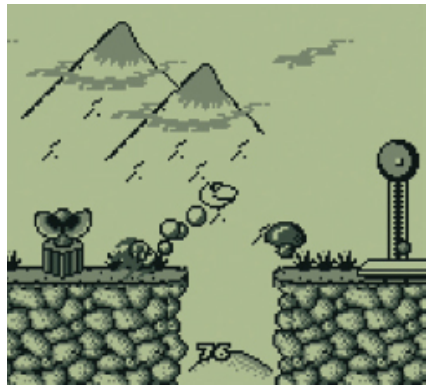
WHILE THE PREVIOUS two Smurfs games were released on numerous formats, The Smurfs' Nightmare was created exclusively for the Game Boy (and the Game Boy Color, if you want to be like Pedantic Smurf, who I just made up). Gargamel has cast a spell on the Smurf Village which has trapped all the Smurfs inside awful nightmares. The only one not affected was Hefty Smurf, so off he pops to rescue each Smurf by entering their homes, joining them in their dreams, and smurfing seven shades of smurf out of whatever is causing them grief, while collecting all the magic leaves needed to end that particular nightmare. It's more of the same solid platforming the Smurfs series specialised in. ■

FACT

Although the Smurf Village is quite small, around 100 Smurfs live there. Presumably the Smurf who's in charge of reasonable living conditions is smurfing things up.

SNEAKY SNAKES

Year 1991
Publisher Tradewest
Developer Rare



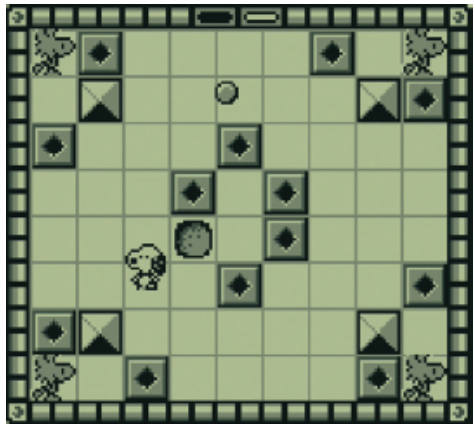
SNEAKY SNAKES IS a sequel of sorts to Rare's NES game Snake Rattle 'n' Roll, though it features different protagonists and is played from a different viewpoint. The game follows the story of Atilla and Genghis, a pair of snakes who have to rescue their friend Sonia Snake from the evil Nasty Nibbler. Playing as one of the snakes – or both in co-op if you have a Link Cable – you must make your way through 16 stages, eating little creatures called Nibbleys along the way. As in Snake Rattle 'n' Roll, the more Nibbleys you eat the heavier you get, and the aim is to get heavy enough to ring the bell that opens the exit. Whereas its NES predecessor had an isometric viewpoint, however, this is a side-scroller. ■

FACT

Every enemy in the game has a name that starts with 'Nibble', including Nibblefish, Nibblebats, Nibblecopters, Nibblespiders and Nibblesplats.

SNOOPY'S MAGIC SHOW

Year Publisher Developer 1990 Kemco Kemco



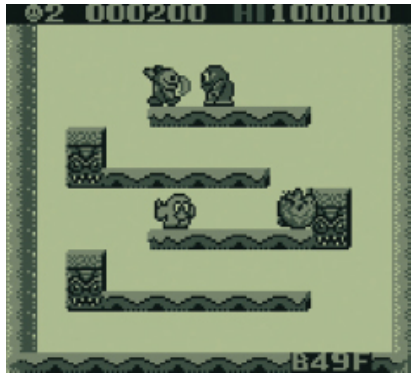
AFTER THE LEGENDARY magician Snoopy the Great's difficult Magic Ball Trick goes wrong, he ends up with balls flying all over the place and multiple Woodstock clones trapped by them. Playing as Snoopy, you have to put things right over the course of 120 stages by gathering up all the Woodstocks while avoiding the balls. Although you can usually do okay if you keep your eye on the balls and figure out what path they're going to take, things get less straightforward in later levels when Snoopy's cousin Spike turns up as a second enemy, one with an actual brain this time. You can also choose to play the game in a two-player competitive mode, with one player as Snoopy and the other as Spike. ■

FACT

The game was originally called Death Ball, before it got the Peanuts licence and became significantly more familyfriendly.

SNOW BROTHERS

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Capcom Naxat Soft



OFTEN REFERRED TO as Snow Bros Jr (because that's the game's name in Japan and on the title screen), Snow Brothers is a Game Boy port of Toaplan's 1990 arcade game. Whereas the arcade version had two snowman twins called Nick and Tom heading out to rescue a pair of princesses, the Game Boy version – due to its lack of a two-player mode – instead has you playing as Nick as he tries to rescue Tom, who's mysteriously disappeared somewhere in the Ice Palace of King Scorch. The game plays similarly to Taito's Bubble Bobble in that it takes place over a series of single-screen stages. Where it differs is in your attack method: instead of spitting bubbles, Nick can turn enemies into giant snowballs. ■

FACT

While the arcade version has 50 stages, the Game Boy has an extra 10 on top of that, including a level 60 boss fight where you cool down an angry sun.

SOCCER MANIA

Year	1992
Publisher	Sony Imagesoft
Developer	Kitty Group

HOW WOULD YOU feel about a football game where you can only play as one team? Luckily (perhaps) for you, that's a feeling you can experience all for yourself if you play Soccer Mania. In this oddly pared-back take on the sport, you can only opt to play as the underdog USA team in single-player mode, and must take on the other five teams – Japan, Brazil, England, West Germany and France – in whatever order you choose, to win some trophy or other. If you're absolutely adamant that you must play as one of the other teams, then you'll need a friend, another copy of the game and a Link Cable. Only then, via the game's two-player competitive mode, will all six teams be made available to you. ■

FACT

In Japan, the game is known as Soccer Boy and, naturally, you can only play as the Japanese team instead of the USA team.

SOLARSTRIKER

Year 1990
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Minakuchi Engineering

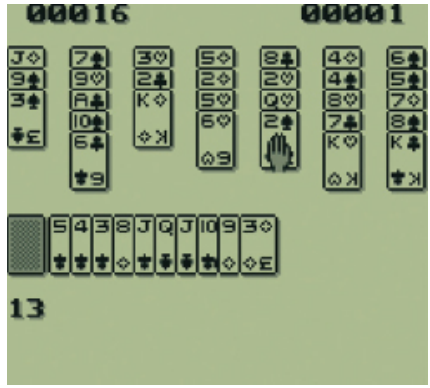
IN THE DAYS before it found huge success with Donkey Kong, Nintendo released a bunch of shoot ‘em ups in arcades. It’s not a genre the company is really associated with these days, though, with SolarStriker being one of the few examples of a Nintendo shooter post-gorilla. The game is set in the year 2159 and has you piloting the SolarStriker, an ultraperformance fighter ship designed by Earth’s best scientists, as you try to defeat invading forces from the planet Reticulon. The gameplay is as predictable as the plot, offering fairly straightforward verticallyscrolling shooting over the course of six stages and a typical powerup system in which the more giant ‘P’ icons you collect the more impressive your firepower becomes. ■

FACT

The music from SolarStriker featured in later episodes of *Captain N: The Game Master*, the Saturday morning TV show based on Nintendo games.

SOLITAIRE FUNPAK

Year Publisher Developer 1994 Interplay Beam Software



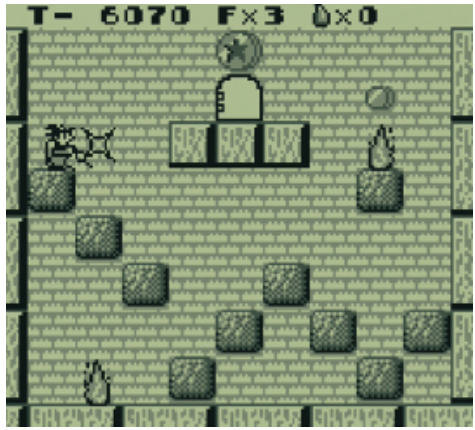
THE THIRD ENTRY in Interplay's Fun Pak series (after 4-in-1 Fun Pak Vol 1 and 2) deals solely with variations on the single-player card game Solitaire. It's one of the more comprehensive Solitaire packages on the Game Boy with no fewer than 12 different games to play: Klondike, Tripeaks, Pyramid, Cruel, Free Cell, Golf, Canfield, Aces Up, Scorpion, Poker, Stonewall and Florentine. If you fancy yourself as something of a Solitaire card shark you can then take on the game's Tournament mode, where you play each of the 12 games in a row. A unique scoring system has been applied to each game, and in Tournament mode your score carries over to each one, with the aim being to beat your previous high score across all 12. ■

FACT

The manual says Solitaire 'has been accused of being a colossal waste of time yet it has mesmerised its players for centuries'. Way to talk up your game, chaps.

SOLOMON'S CLUB

Year 1991 *Publisher* Tecmo *Developer* Graphic Research



THIS IS A port of sorts of NES game Solomon's Key, albeit one with a number of differences. The premise is the same: playing as a sorcerer called Dana you have to clear 50 stages by finding the key and using it on the exit door. Dana's main power is the ability to use their magic wand to make blocks appear and disappear, thereby removing barriers or creating ways to access parts of each stage. Although the Game Boy version is a faithful recreation of the NES version's gameplay, it's easier thanks to a new shop feature where you can collect cash and spend it on useful power-ups like a water gun (which puts out fire enemies) and a hammer (which breaks enemy-spawning mirrors). ■

FACT

Solomon's Key designer Michitaka Tsuruta has explained that the game was partly based on Lode Runner, and its ability to make part of the stage disappear and reappear.

SPACE INVADERS

Year Publisher Developer 1994 Nintendo Taito

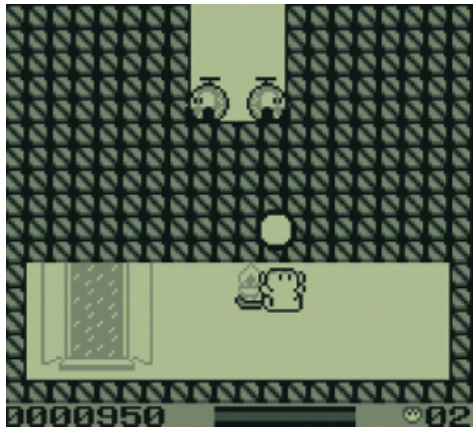
AT FIRST GLANCE this is a straight port of the classic 1978 arcade game, but there are plenty of surprises to be found on this cartridge. The first is a two-player Link Cable mode in which both players share the screen at the same time, playing at either end (your opponent appears as a UFO). Perhaps more surprising, however, is what happens when you plug the cartridge into the SNES's Super Game Boy peripheral. Not only do you get to play the Game Boy version in colour as expected, there's also a hidden second port called Space Invaders: The Arcade Game. Choosing this leads to a slight pause before the cartridge copies over an entirely separate, exclusive SNES game to the console's memory. ■

FACT

The arcade original was black and white but faked colour by putting tinted sheets of cellophane over the screen. Playing on the Super Game Boy adds a 'cellophane colour' option.

SPANKY'S QUEST

Year 1992
Publisher Natsume
Developer Natsume



ONE OF THE few examples of a game releasing on the Game Boy before coming to consoles, Spanky's Quest is an odd cross between single-screen platformers such as Bubble Bobble, and volleyball. Spanky is a monkey who can make bubbles appear (it's thankfully never explained how), and if these bubbles hit enemies it'll temporarily stun them. The aim, however, is to actually defeat all the enemies in each stage, so in order to do this you have to bounce the bubble off your head. The more you do this, the larger the bubble will grow, until you press the B button to pop it, turning it into a ball of energy that can kill the bad guys. It gets points for originality, at least. ■

FACT

If the idea of a monkey called Spanky makes you uncomfortable for whatever reason, you may wish to get the Japanese version, with the less innuendo-laden title Lucky Monkey.

SPEEDBALL 2: BRUTAL DELUXE

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Mindscape Spidersoft

SPEEDBALL 2 IS perhaps better known in Europe, where the home computer version (especially on the Amiga) was regarded as one of the best sports games at the time. It's set in a futuristic cyberpunk world, where such frivolous sports as football, rugby and American football have all taken a back seat to Speedball, a sort of amalgamation of them all. The aim of the game is to score points by throwing your ball into the opponent's goal, but there are other gimmicks on the playing field such as multipliers and various hazards designed to make things trickier. The Game Boy port is a reasonable one given the drop in processing power and graphical fidelity. ■

FACT

In case you're wondering, Brutal Deluxe doesn't refer to any sort of special edition or anything like that: it's the name of the team you play as in the game.

SPEEDY GONZALES

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Sunsoft Sunsoft

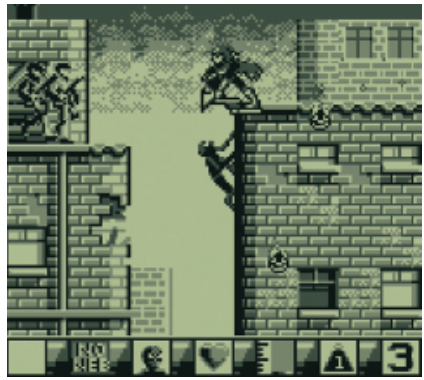
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG may never have made it to the Game Boy, but there was at least one fast-paced anthropomorphic mammal who got his own platformer on the handheld. Speedy Gonzales's friends have been kidnapped by the evil Rat King so he runs out (extremely quickly, naturally) to rescue them. The game takes place over six regions – an ice world, Mexico, a forest, a desert, the countryside and Cheese Island – and each is split into three stages and a boss. Sonic's influence is clear throughout: not only are most of the worlds called Ice Zone, Mexico Zone and the like, the stages are also littered with loops and springboards that look like they've come straight out of the Sega hero's games. ■

FACT

Speedy is the 'fastest mouse in all Mexico' but, in a bitter twist of irony, his cousin Slowpoke Rodriguez is the slowest.

SPIDER-MAN 2

Year Publisher Developer 1992 LJN Bits Studios



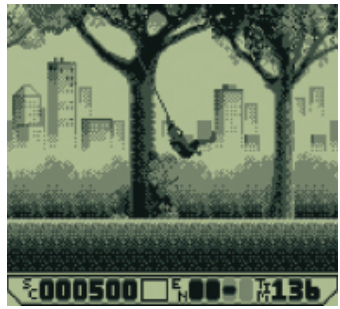
THE SEQUEL TO The Amazing Spider-Man ditches the superlative in North America, which is probably apt because Spidey doesn't seem so amazing at the start of the game. He's been framed for a $1 million robbery so he has to find out who's really behind it and web their rump to clear his name. As is often the case in games like this, there are multiple villains all vying for Spider-Man's attention, meaning you have to take on the likes of the Hobgoblin, Lizard, Carnage, Graviton and Mysterio over the course of the adventure. There are six stages, taking in such sights as a lab, a sewer, a factory and an amusement park before the final confrontation atop the Empire State Building. ■

FACT

Graviton is a Canadian super-villain who can manipulate gravity with his mind. In his first appearance, the Avengers beat him by making him think a friend had committed suicide, which seems harsh.

SPIDER-MAN 3: INVASION OF THE SPIDER-SLAYERS

Year 1993 *Publisher* LJN *Developer* Bits Studios



THE FINAL GAME in the ‘Amazing’ Spider-Man series is based on the *Invasion of the Spider-Slayers* comics from late 1992. This time, not only are Electro and Scorpion trying to get in Spider-Man’s way, he’s also got to deal with a weird and wonderful array of mechanical creatures called Spider-Slayers who are all out to squish this heroic spider with a rolled up newspaper (so to speak). While the game follows the typical action platformer formula it does throw in some twists to make things more interesting. In the first stage, for example, you have to focus on defeating a set number of muggers (who are on skateboards) because punching anyone else has no effect on your progress. Like in real life. ■

FACT

In the six-part comic series of the same name, the Spider-Slayers have been created by Alistair Smythe. He’s trying to avenge his father, who previously died trying to kill Spider-Man.

SPIDER-MAN AND THE X-MEN IN ARCADE’S REVENGE

Year 1993
Publisher LJN
Developer Unexpected Development

THIS NOTORIOUSLY DIFFICULT platformer sees your friendly neighbourhood Spider-Man teaming up with your friendliness-varied, neighbourhood-shunned X-Men as they attempt to defeat trickster supervillain Arcade. Following an initial stage in which Spidey has to defuse bombs, the game then lets the player choose from five separate stages, each of which stars a different character: Spider-Man, Wolverine, Cyclops, Storm and Gambit. These stages can be completed in any order but only once they've all been beaten can you play the final stage, in which Spider-Man faces off against Arcade. Critics cited the lack of save or password feature combined with the lack of continues as a reason for its high difficulty. ■

FACT

The back of the game box screams 'STOP WASTING TIME READING THIS BOX', so presumably Acclaim wanted you to tear it open and play it right there in the shop before paying.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Year 1992
Publisher Wisdom Tree
Developer Wisdom Tree

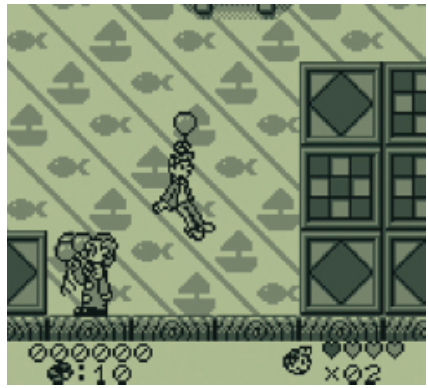
ANOTHER UNLICENSED ADVENTURE game from Christian game developer Wisdom Tree, Spiritual Warfare tasks you with exploring a modern-day environment in search of the full Armour of God. This consists of six pieces, each of which gives you a different power: the Boots of the Gospel, for example, let you walk over wet cement (not quite walking on water, to be fair) while the Breastplate of Righteousness halves the amount of damage you take. Along the way you'll find angels who give you Bible trivia questions. Answer these correctly and you'll earn Spirit Points, which can be used to buy fruit-based weapons. Which I suppose technically means that if you're a heathen you get to play in Hard mode. ■

FACT

The game ends with you visiting a prison, locating the source of evil in a demon stronghold and defeating this final demon by throwing fruit at it. Which I think was in Leviticus.

SPIROU

Year 1996
Publisher Infogrames
Developer Bit Managers



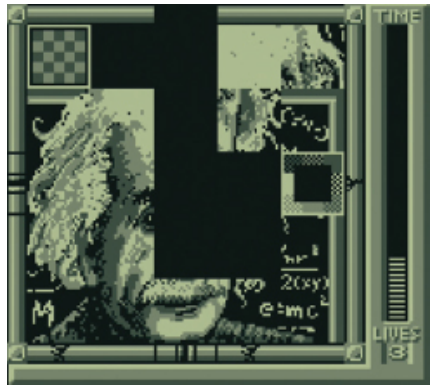
THIS PLATFORM GAME is based on the popular Franco-Belgian comic series *Spirou et Fantasio*, and follows the adventures of ace reporter Spirou. The game opens in New York, where Spirou's friend, the Count of Champignac, is revealing his latest inventions to his fellow scientists. These inventions are designed to rid the world of evil, but this doesn't sit too well with the suitably evil robot Cyanida, who promptly decides to kidnap the Count mid-presentation. Spirou gives chase, and so begins a platformer in which our hero finds himself in all manner of scrapes, including running along the tops of speeding trains, a shoot 'em up section in the air and a stage in which he's shrunk down to just 10cm tall. ■

FACT

In 2013, a new device for observing exoplanets was created by an international consortium. It was called the SPIRou for short, and featured a silhouette of Spirou in its logo.

SPLITZ

Year 1993
Publisher Imagineer
Developer Enigma Variations



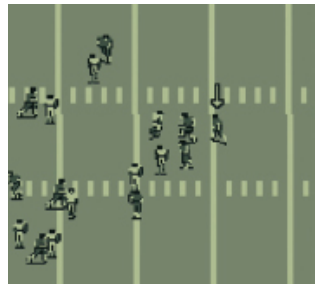
THIS UNDERRATED PUZZLE game began life as a British home computer game called Split Personalities, before being ported to the Game Boy in Europe and Japan. The game is a more action-based take on the sliding puzzle mini-game and has you trying to recreate images of famous people by firing panels out of the top-left corner then sliding them around the play area. When you move a piece it'll keep sliding until it hits a wall or another piece, meaning you can form strategies such as building walls out of pieces you aren't currently using, to form paths for others. There are 12 stages in total, and over the course of a playthrough you'll put together images of the likes of Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley, Abraham Lincoln and Albert Einstein. ■

FACT

The original computer version featured images of more UK-based personalities including Clive Sinclair, Neil Kinnock, Mick Jagger and Charles and Diana.

SPORTS ILLUSTRATED: CHAMPIONSHIP FOOTBALL & BASEBALL

Year 1993
Publisher Malibu Games
Developer Halestorm



POPULAR SPORTS MAGAZINE *Sports Illustrated* licensed out its name for this two-in-one cartridge which offers a pair of pastimes for the price of one. Naturally, as the name suggests, the two sports in question here are American football and baseball, with a menu at the start letting players choose which to play. The *Sports Illustrated* licence is the only one to be found here, however, as neither the NFL or MLB (nor their respective players' associations) are officially represented here. This means no real team names or logos and no real player names. The games themselves at least boast some flair, with digitised voice samples and occasional cut-scenes distinguishing them from more straightforward efforts on the Game Boy. ■

FACT

In a decent use of the brand, if you perform a particularly impressive play during a game, it'll cut to a *Sports Illustrated* cover highlighting it.

SPORTS ILLUSTRATED FOR KIDS: THE ULTIMATE TRIPLE DARE!

Year 1994
Publisher Malibu Games
Developer Halestorm

AS WELL AS the main *Sports Illustrated* magazine there was also a version for kids that made its debut in 1989. Naturally, given that Malibu was already dealing with the *Sports Illustrated* licence, a further deal was done to turn the kids' edition into a video game too. Rather than focusing on more traditional American sports like American football and baseball, The Ultimate Triple Dare instead offers three more extreme sports, each with two separate events: Snowboarding (downhill and halfpipe), Skateboarding (urban and halfpipe) and Mountain Bike Racing (trail and mountain). There's also a Triathlon mode in which you play all three events in a row. You can also choose to play as a boy or a girl. ■

FACT

At the time of writing, *Sports Illustrated for Kids* is still going strong, decades after its first issue in January 1989.

SPORTS ILLUSTRATED: GOLF CLASSIC

Year 1993
Publisher Malibu Games
Developer Unexpected Development

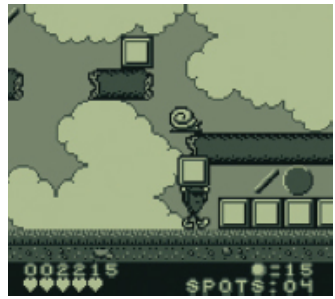
WHAT IF YOU'RE a diehard *Sports Illustrated* reader but you've got no interest in American football or baseball and you're certainly too old to be reading the kids' edition? Step forward Golf Classic, which contains two fictional courses to play on, Country Oaks and Clover Creek. You can choose to play as a male or female golfer at either an amateur or pro level: amateur golfers have a slower swing that's easier to control, and can play one mulligan on each hole if you mess up. The game has a rather unusual approach to its swinging mechanics: instead of stopping a cursor on a power bar you watch an animation of your golfer swinging and choose when to release and hit the button based on its timing. ■

FACT

As of 2016, Tiger Woods was ranked fourth in the most *Sports Illustrated* cover appearances of all time, behind LeBron James, Muhammad Ali and Michael Jordan.

SPOT: THE COOL ADVENTURE

Year	1993
Publisher	Virgin Interactive
Developer	Visual Concepts



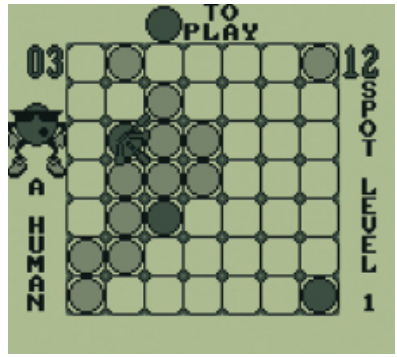
IF YOU WERE the globetrotting type in the early ‘90s and liked your food brands, there’s a possibility that you may have ended up buying McDonaldland on the Game Boy in Europe, then buying the 7 Up themed Spot: The Cool Adventure in North America. You would then have dropped to your knees in anguish at the ruse you’d fallen for, because both are actually the same platformer, with different characters in each region. Whereas McDonaldland had its heroes Mick and Mack trying to find Ronald McDonald’s magic bag, here you’re playing as Cool Spot as he… well, the plot is a little thinner. Spot has jumped into a Game Boy game, you see, and doesn’t want to leave until he’s completed every level. Very meta.

FACT

The worlds in McDonaldland are Grimace’s Forest, Birdie’s Mountain and Ronald’s Funhouse. In Spot they’re renamed Carbonated Forest, Uncola Mountain and Cool Funhouse.

SPOT: THE VIDEO GAME

Year	1991
Publisher	Virgin Interactive / Hi Tech Expression
Developer	Software Creations



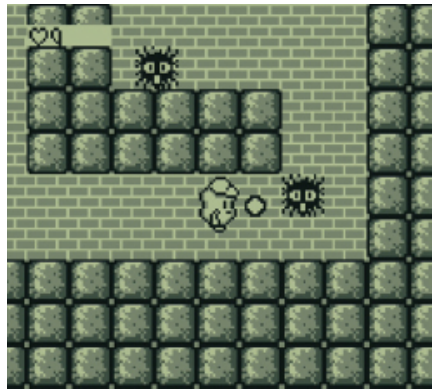
BEFORE HE GOT involved in all that platforming malarkey, 7 Up mascot Cool Spot made his video game debut in a noticeably more slow-paced game. Spot: The Video Game is a board game that plays like Othello (aka Reversi), with that game's playing pieces replaced by little Spot characters. Playing as either the dark or light Spots, you have to fill the board with as many of your Spots as you can by cloning and moving your Spots around the grid. When one of your Spots lands on a new square, any adjacent Spots belonging to your opponent are swapped to your colour. Whereas other versions on NES and PC allowed up to four players to compete, the Game Boy version is a two-player game only. ■

FACT

Although Cool Spot was an American mascot for 7 Up, an old UK 7 Up advert from 1983 called 'Cool Town' featured a character that looked just like him, minus the sunglasses.

SPUD'S ADVENTURE

Year Publisher Developer 1991 Atlus Atlus



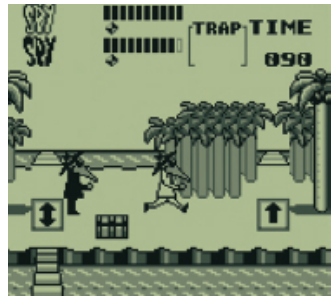
THE VEGETABLE KINGDOM was a place of peace until the evil Devi swooped in and kidnapped Princess Mato. Many warriors have tried and failed to rescue King Vegitan's daughter, but one day a wanderer called Spud arrives at the castle and offers to help out. Playing as Spud, you have to explore the four mazes of Devi's Far Tower while taking on his Kitchen Army along the way. Although it's a top-down action game, Spud's Adventure does still have some RPG elements, such as the ability to gain XP by defeating enemies. It's got a good sense of humour, most of which comes from the game's supporting cast including the likes of Terry Turnip, Arnie Eggplant and Gerrit Carrot, who can all help Spud on his quest. ■

FACT

The North American version of Spud's Adventure is quite rare, with complete boxed copies often selling for over $2,000 on eBay.

SPY VS SPY: OPERATION BOOBYTRAP

Year 1992
Publisher Kemco
Developer First Star Software



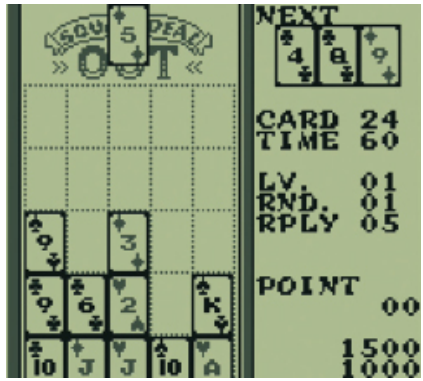
BASED ON THE Mad Magazine comic strip of the same name, Spy vs Spy revolves around two bumbling secret agents, simply known as White and Black. Their commander general at Mad Secret Service is sick of the two trying to backstab each other (literally) so he sends them both off on the same mission to retrieve some important documents. Playing as either White or Black, you have to find an attaché case and gather these documents then take them to the exit before your opponent does. To make things interesting, you have the ability to plant booby traps in search locations: putting bombs in treasure chests, loosening coconuts in palm trees so they fall on your victim's head, that sort of thing. ■

FACT

Spy vs Spy was originally created in 1960 by Cuban cartoonist Antonio Prohías, who fled Cuba just three days before Castro's government nationalised the press.

SQUARE DEAL: THE GAME OF TWO DIMENSIONAL POKER

Year Publisher Developer 1992 DTMC Hect



SQUARE DEAL IS what Tetris would have become had it been invented in Las Vegas instead. The player is given a 5x5 grid and a full deck of 52 cards is shuffled. The cards drop one by one and you have to arrange them in a way that forms poker hands, either horizontally or vertically. There are some quirks you also have to bear in mind as you play: for example, a hand will clear as soon as it's valid, even if you're working on a better one, so if you line up a 10, J, Q of the same suit it'll clear them as a three-card straight flush, even if you're preparing to drop a K, A next to them for a Royal Flush. ■

FACT

The game's subtitle describes it as 'the game of two dimensional poker', which seems redundant given playing cards are three-dimensional objects.

STAR TREK: 25TH ANNIVERSARY

Year 1992
Publisher Ultra Games / Palcom
Developer Visual Concepts

WHEN A GIANT destructive device called the Doomsday Machine starts roaming space, obliterating entire planets at a time, Captain James T Kirk and the USS *Enterprise* are called on to stop it. Kirk and his crew have to visit three worlds and collect the 12 pieces of a powerful new Starfleet weapon called the Disruptor, then put it all together and use it to destroy the Doomsday Machine. The game is split into three parts, the first consisting of side-scrolling shoot 'em up sections where you shoot asteroids and any enemy ships who attack. Then there are planet exploration stages where you look for pieces of the Disruptor. Finally, once it's all built, it's back to a shoot 'em up again for the final boss battle. ■

FACT

It's never mentioned in the manual, but you can perform an emergency warp jump to avoid danger once per stage by holding Select and pressing Left on the D-Pad.

STAR TREK GENERATIONS: BEYOND THE NEXUS

Year 1994
Publisher Absolute / GameTek
Developer Imagineering

BEYOND THE NEXUS is based on the 1994 movie *Star Trek Generations*, which saw Captain Kirk meeting Captain Picard in some sort of time travelling hijinks. The game appears to be based partly on the previous year's Star Trek: The Next Generation game, in that its first-person ship sections look similar (though they're more action-focused). However, there are now also top-down sections where you get to explore planets. The game mostly follows the plot of the film, meaning at times you're playing as Captain Kirk while at others you're instead in control of Captain Picard. That said, it does deviate from the script occasionally: right at the start, for example, you're attacked by Tholian drones, which doesn't happen in the film. ■

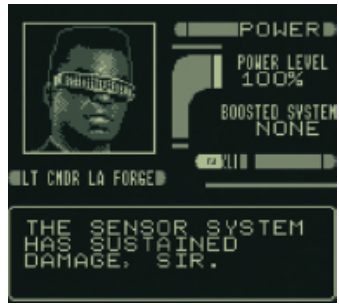
FACT

The film's original ending saw Kirk dying after he was shot in the back. Test audiences apparently hated this, so a new ending was hastily put together where he got a more heroic death.

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

Year Publisher Developer

1993 Absolute / GameTek
Imagineering



BEFORE ITS GENERATIONS game, Absolute gave us another Star Trek title based on *The Next Generation* TV series. The game puts you in the uniform of a Starfleet Academy cadet, and puts you in a series of simulation missions, given to you by Captain Jean-Luc Picard. The entire game takes place from the Captain's command chair, where you can give commands to (and get advice from) various USS *Enterprise-D* crew members. For example, you speak to Data to set the ship's course, while O'Brian mans the transporter and La Forge monitors the ship's power, rerouting it for you if needed. Then, if you find yourself in combat, Worf can arm the ship's weapons and raise or lower the shields. ■

FACT

The game has a fun take on the level select cheat. Enter the password OVERRIDE and start the game normally. When Picard explains the mission you can press Up on the D-Pad to pick a different one.

STAR WARS

Year 1992
Publisher Capcom / Ubisoft
Developer NMS Software

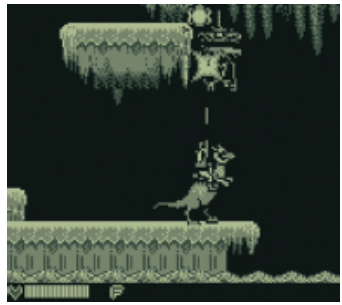
THIS DIFFICULT ADAPTATION of the original 1977 *Star Wars* movie was originally released on the NES before it was ported to the Game Boy. Initially playing as Luke Skywalker, your adventure takes you roughly through the same story beats as the movie itself, but with a few differences along the way. Starting in the caves of Tattooine, your adventure takes you through a Sandcrawler, Obi-Wan's cave, Mos Eisley, an asteroid field and the Death Star, culminating in the film's iconic trench run where you get to drop a bomb in the Death Star's exhaust port. Over time you can unlock Han and Leia to control during the platformer sections, and at times you'll switch to first-person flying sections or top-down vehicle sections (most notably for the trench run itself). ■

FACT

As in the movie, you don't actually come faceto- face with Darth Vader at any point in the game. You only see him on the Game Over screen (which appears frequently, to be fair).

STAR WARS: THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

Year 1992
Publisher Capcom / Ubisoft
Developer NMS Software



FOLLOWING THE SUCCESS of the first NES Star Wars game, a sequel was released which also eventually got the Game Boy treatment. Whereas the first game lets you unlock other characters, here you only play as Luke throughout. To make up for this, however, the game now introduces Force powers, which can be unlocked and used to give Luke an edge. One lets him deflect energy blasts, for example, while another makes him temporarily invincible and another lets him levitate. As before, the game follows the film's plot – taking in such locations as Hoth, Dagobah and Cloud City – but throws in a few changes: most notably, you get to save Han Solo and beat Darth Vader in this one, keeping both of Luke's hands intact. ■

FACT

Both the NES and Game Boy versions of Star Wars and The Empire Strikes Back were officially rereleased on cartridge in 2019 by Limited Run Games.

STARGATE

Year 1994
Publisher Acclaim
Developer Probe Entertainment

WHILE THE SNES and Mega Drive got platform games based on the *Stargate* movie, the first Stargate game was actually this Game Boy release. It's a sort of circular take on a match-three game like Dr Mario, in which you drop hieroglyphic tiles down a well in an attempt to stack up three in a row. Naturally, there are more symbols than there are spaces in the well, meaning it will eventually stack up if you don't manage them properly. As well as an endless Skill Mode, there's also a Battle Mode where you take on the movie's enemy Ra by trying to complete numerous puzzles while he drops more tiles on you at random. There's also a two-player Link Cable version of Battle Mode. ■

FACT

Early test screenings of the movie were a disaster, so the character of Ra was given subtitles that explained the plot. Later test screenings were hugely positive as a result.

STARHAWK

Year 1993
Publisher Accolade
Developer NMS Software

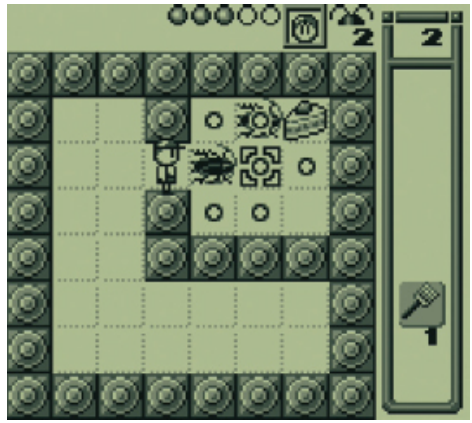
YOU ARE A ‘master mariner’ (trust me, it’s a compliment) piloting the scout ship *StarHawk*, and your mission is to check out the evil empire of Axtar to see what’s going on. It turns out what’s going on is that Axtar is swarming with half-organic, half-technological mutants who all want to tear your ship to pieces, so the only way to escape is to blast your way through. StarHawk consists of five stages, each with a boss at the end, and is a fairly by-the-books side-scrolling shoot ‘em up. Along the way you can collect power-ups which give you different weapons, but the laser is easily the most powerful, to the extent that once you get it you’ll be actively avoiding other power-ups. ■

FACT

StarHawk was finally released in North America in 2021 via Limited Run Games, which sold a limited edition reprint of the game for $35. Naturally, expect to pay a bit more than that now.

STOP THAT ROACH!

Year Publisher Developer 1994 Koei Koei



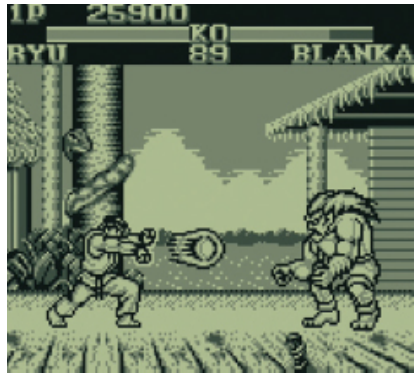
KOEI WAS USUALLY known for its historical and strategic simulation games in the ‘80s and early ‘90s, so Stop That Roach! was something of a departure for the publisher. It doesn’t completely ditch the Koei sensibilities, though, because there’s still turnbased strategy involved. Each of the game’s 100 stages has you trying to kill all the cockroaches on a grid, which you have to do within five turns. Depending on the stage, you have different actions available to you for each turn, ranging from simple moving to using a slipper to hit the roach, using a spray can to kill up to four at a time, or jumping in the air to scare them away. Some stages also let you set roach traps in advance. ■

FACT

The Japanese version had a tie-in deal with Hoi Hoi, a popular brand of cockroach glue traps. The branding was removed for the western release.

STREET FIGHTER II

Year Publisher Developer 1995 Nintendo Sun L



THERE ARE NUMEROUS games that are considered ‘impossible ports’ and for a while a Game Boy version of Street Fighter II was considered one of them. It did eventually arrive, however, and as expected, heavy concessions were made. The game is technically based on Super Street Fighter, as noted by the character profiles and moves like Ryu’s flaming fireball, but only features nine of the 16 characters featured in that game (Honda, Dhalsim, Vega, Cammy, Dee Jay, Fei Long and T Hawk are nowhere to be seen). The game’s trademark six-button fighting system was also obviously affected: instead, players could execute weak punches and kicks by slightly tapping the A or B button, and stronger ones by holding them for longer. ■

FACT

If you play the game through a Super Game Boy cart, the border changes to match the stage you’re fighting on, to show how that stage looks on the SNES version.

STREET RACER

Year Publisher Developer 1996 Ubisoft Vivid Image

STREET RACER WAS Ubisoft's attempt to challenge Super Mario Kart, and was relatively well received on consoles. The Game Boy port followed a couple of years later and, like Street Fighter II, was one of those games that technically shouldn't have been possible on the handheld. Unlike Capcom's fighter, however, the Game Boy version of Street Racer sacrifices very little beyond the obvious huge visual and audio downgrade. All eight playable characters are present, as are the bonus Soccer and Rumble modes that add some variety to the standard racing action. It even runs smoothly and attempts its own take on the SNES's pseudo-3D Mode 7 effect, even though everything is so small that it can be hard to tell what's going on at times. ■

FACT

The cartridge contains code for a two-player Link Cable mode. The code was never completed and the final game is singleplayer only.

SUMO FIGHTER

Year Publisher Developer 1993 DTMC

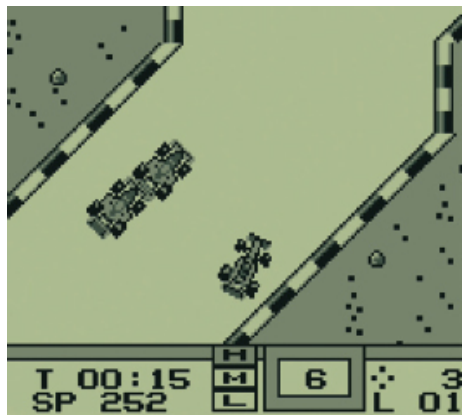
KID SUMO WRESTLERS ARE known for their strength, but perhaps not for their running and jumping ability, which is why there are so few of them in platform games. Sumo Fighter is one such platformer, however, putting you in the mawashi of undefeated sumo champion Bontaro Heiseiyama, or Bon Chan to his friends. One day Bon Chan gets a letter from 'the evil mayor of Kyoto' revealing that he's kidnapped Bon Chan's fiancee Miss Kayo, so off Bon Chan stomps to get her back. There are 15 stages in the game, and you have to guide Bon Chan through each of them, slapping and throwing any of the mayor's minions who get in your way. There are also sumo wrestling, arm wrestling and thumb wrestling mini-games. ■

FACT

A mawashi is the loincloth that sumo wrestlers wear in competition. The topranked professional sumo wrestlers often wear mawashi made out of silk.

SUNSOFT GRAND PRIX

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Sunsoft Lenar



THIS RELATIVELY FORGOTTEN F1 racing game is based on the 1991 Formula One World Championship, offering players the chance to take on every track in the same order they appeared during that season (although, oddly, it only has 15 tracks instead of 16, with the Mexico circuit completely missing for no apparent reason). There are nine different cars to choose from, each with different engines and transmission types, but while each performs slightly differently they don't look any different aesthetically on the track. Despite clearly being based on a particular F1 season, all the driver names are fake, so expect to be racing against the likes of B. Allen, T. Cross and Y. Keith. ■

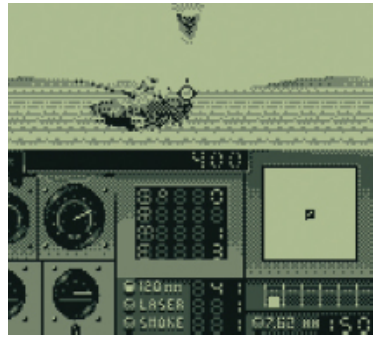
FACT

The 1991 Mexican Grand Prix was won by Italian driver Riccardo Patrese, but since Mexico isn't in this game you won't be able to recreate it.

SUPER BATTLETANK: WAR IN THE GULF

Year Publisher Developer

1994 Absolute Entertainment / GameTek Panoramic Software



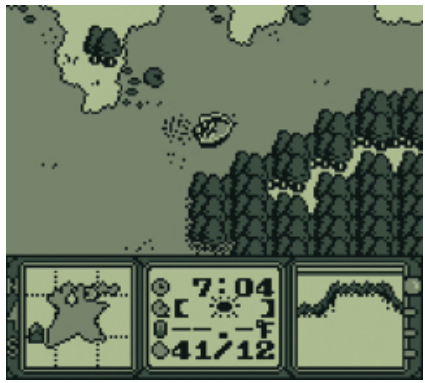
DOING EXACTLY WHAT it says in the title, Super Battletank puts you inside a ruddy big M1A1 Abrams battle tank and tasks you with completing 10 missions set during the Gulf War. Your tank is armed with a 7.62mm machine gun, a 120mm cannon and 'fire and forget' laser-guided missiles, and when things get a little too spicy for your liking you can also deploy a smoke screen which hides your tank from view. Although this writer personally hasn't seen battle, I'd imagine the real thing is slightly more tactical than this game, where you basically just track down tanks and missile launchers and fire rockets at them until they explode. ■

FACT

In real life the M1A1 could destroy other tanks from a distance of up to 2.5km. You usually have to get within about 100 feet of them in this game, though.

SUPER BLACK BASS

Year Publisher Developer 1998 HOT-B Starfish



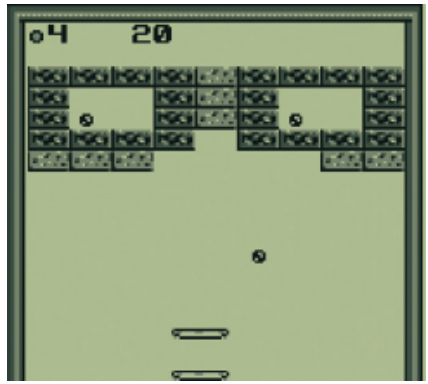
THE GAME BOY wasn't immune to the slew of bass fishing games that could be found on other consoles, and Super Black Bass was an offering by frequent fish game developer HOT-B. The aim is to take part in four competitions – a local amateur tournament, the Amateur Bass Championship, the Pro Bass Circuit and the Super Bass Championship – and catch enough bass to qualify for the next event. There are four fictional bodies of water to explore on your boat as you search for the perfect place to stop and cast your lure. There are eight of these lures, including Fat Boys, Big Champs, Wavy Worms, Minnows and a couple of others that don't actually sound like innuendos. ■

FACT

Oddly, the game was released in Japan two years earlier and contained a battery save option and Super Game Boy support, two things the western release doesn't have.

SUPER BREAKOUT

Year Publisher Developer 1998 Majesco Morning Star Multimedia



THIS ISN'T THE same port of Super Breakout that features in Arcade Classics 5 alongside Battlezone: instead, it's a completely different version with a wider range of options. There are four types of stage to play: Regular, Double (where you have two bats and two balls), Cavity (where you can free extra balls found in little pockets in the wall) and Progressive (where the blocks continue to slowly move downwards. You can also choose to have standard beeps every time the ball bounces, or replace them with explosions or musical notes. Finally, you can choose either a single-player game or a competitive two-player game where you and a friend take turns to get the highest score. ■

FACT

American folk musician John Braden recorded a children's story about Super Breakout on vinyl, which involved a NASA astronaut bouncing missiles of light to get through a rainbow barrier.

SUPER CHASE HQ

Year 1994
Publisher Taito
Developer ITL

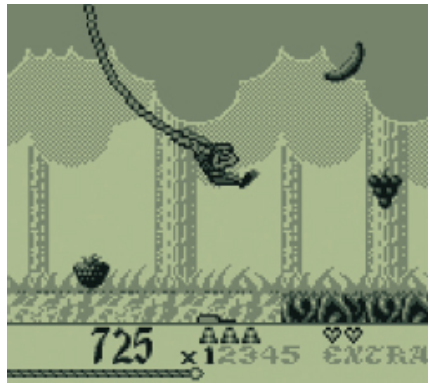
NOT TO BE confused with the standard Chase HQ, this followup was released to accompany the SNES game of the same name. While the 16-bit version was played from a firstperson viewpoint, however, the Game Boy title sticks with the same ‘chase’ camera the series was best known for. As in the other games in the series the aim is to drive at high speed through a section of road until you catch up with each stage’s identified criminal. At this point you have to ram the criminal’s car repeatedly until you essentially wreck it and run it off the road. Super Chase HQ runs a lot smoother than Chase HQ on Game Boy, meaning if you only buy one this is the one to get. ■

FACT

The arcade version of Super Chase HQ is called Super Chase: Criminal Termination in Japan, which sounds quite a bit more lethal than the actual game is.

SUPER HUNCHBACK

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Ocean Ocean



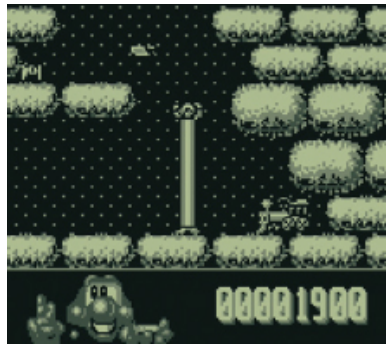
THE ORIGINAL HUNCHBACK was an arcade and home computer game in which players controlled Quasimodo as he made his way across the top of a castle wall. This Game Boy exclusive sequel replaces the original's static single-screen stages with 25 scrolling areas, making it feel more like a platformer of its era. Quasimodo has to navigate each of these stages, avoiding the obstacles along the way, and ring the bell at the end of each to proceed (because he famously loves to ring a bell, that lad). Obstacles include your typical castle-based hazards like spikes, arrows, buzzsaws and spiked ball and chains, but there are also cannonballs which, with the right timing, can be jumped on to travel faster. ■

FACT

The original Hunchback started life as a game about Robin Hood in Sherwood Forest, but it was too similar to Pitfall and so eventually evolved into a Hunchback of Notre Dame tribute.

SUPER JAMES POND

Year 1992
Publisher Ocean
Developer Millennium Interactive



ORIGINALLY RELEASED AS James Pond 2: Codename: RoboCod, subsequent ports of this platformer changed the title (and wisely removed that double colon) to help the game stand alone on its own two flippers. The game stars aquatic agent James Pond as he explores Santa's toy factory in an attempt to rescue the big man himself. Although James himself is a mere small fish, he's wearing special robotic armour which can extend to comical heights, allowing him to reach higher areas. The game was ported to numerous systems and the Game Boy version is one of the least visually detailed (along with the C64 port), meaning James's typically endearing appearance isn't quite as clear. The Game Boy port is also missing some stages. ■

FACT

Oddly, an NES version of James Pond 2 was reviewed in UK magazine *Nintendo Game Zone*, but it was never released, nor has there ever been any trace of it since.

SUPER KICK OFF

Year Publisher Developer

1991 Imagineer Enigma Variations

BEFORE IT BECAME commonly accepted that Sensible Soccer was the best arcade-style football game, there was the Kick Off series created by Dino Dini. Super Kick Off was a spin-off released after Kick Off 2, and retained the intuitive control system that made the main series so popular. Whereas other football games more or less stick the ball to the player's feet, Super Kick Off makes you lose it if you quickly change direction without being careful. The game also has a generous aftertouch mechanic where you can put bend on the ball after you've kicked it. The Game Boy version plays faithfully on the pitch but it's rather limiting in terms of modes and teams (there are only 16 national teams). ■

FACT

There were seven Kick Off games if you include Dino Dini's Goal, which was his attempt to keep his game engine going after Kick Off 3 was released without his involvement.

SUPER MARIO LAND

Year 1989
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Nintendo

TIME MAY HAVE shown that Tetris would be the ‘killer app’ for the Game Boy, but it was a no-brainer that Nintendo had to release a new Mario game alongside the handheld. Super Mario Land wasn’t handled by the Super Mario Bros team of Shigeru Miyamoto, Takashi Tezuka et al: instead, it was produced by Game Boy designer Gunpei Yokoi and directed by Kid Icarus director Satoru Okada. The change in staff had a clear impact, because Super Mario Land has a feel unlike any other Mario game, with floatier physics and odd new enemies such as Koopa Troopa-like turtles who have bombs for their shells (and blow up when you jump on them). The game takes Mario out of his Mushroom Kingdom comfort zone and places him in the less conventional Sarasaland, where he has to save Princess Daisy (making her debut, long before she got mouthy) from the evil alien king Tatanga. It’s a shorter game than the console Super Mario titles, with only four worlds (or kingdoms, as they’re known here) and three stages in each, but it at least packs a lot of variety into these 12 stages. Breaking up the platforming are two shoot ‘em up stages, the first in a tiny submarine and the

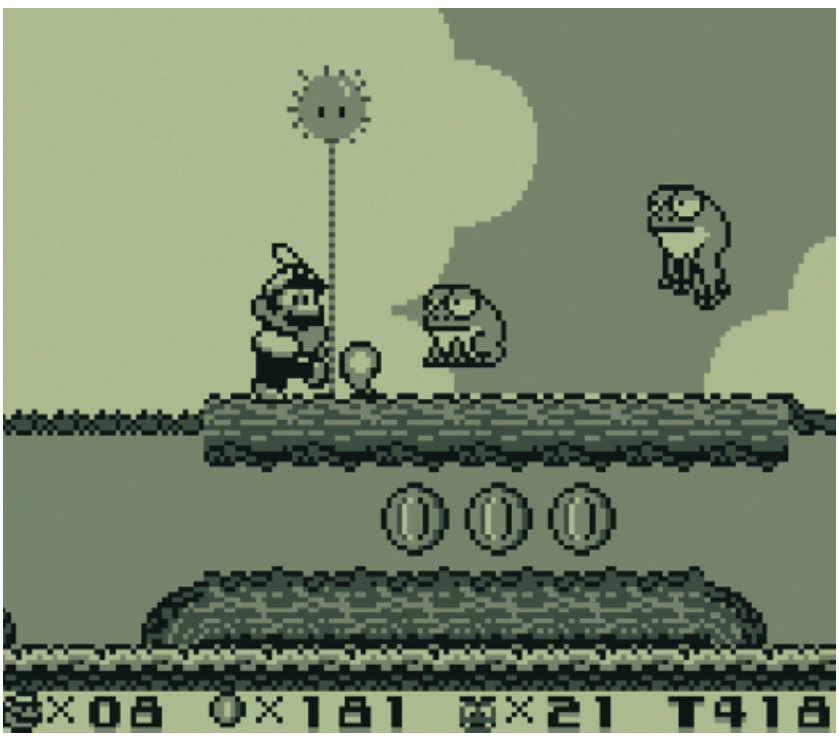
second in a biplane. Super Mario Land is probably the easiest main Mario game, but it remains a unique treat to play to this day. Special mention must also go to composer 'Hip' Tanaka and one of the best ending themes ever. ■

FACT

The UK got a rap song called 'Super Mario Land', performed by Ambassadors of Funk. It reached number 8 in the UK music charts, and is still a toe-tapper despite what anyone tells you.

SUPER MARIO LAND 2: 6 GOLDEN COINS

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Nintendo Nintendo



BY THE TIME Mario returned for his second Game Boy adventure, Nintendo's internal developers had well and truly mastered the handheld's capabilities. As such, Super Mario Land 2 felt far more like a console Mario game (in particular Super Mario World) than the first game. This time the enemy isn't Tatanga, but a cheeky new chap by the name of Wario. While Mario was off fighting Tatanga and rescuing Daisy, Wario took over his castle and decided to make it his own. Also, yes, Mario has a castle for some reason. Mario has been locked out of his abode, but there's a way to get in: he needs to collect the six Golden Coins, each of which is guarded by one of the game's bosses (who are under Wario's spell). Only once you get all six coins can you open the front door to Mario's castle and confront Wario. Mario handles a lot more like his console counterparts in Super Mario Land 2, right down to the addition of the spin jump from Super Mario World. He can also collect a new power-up, the Carrot, which turns him into Bunny Mario and lets him hover in the sky for a while if you keep hitting the jump button. Incredibly, this would be the last 2D platformer starring Mario for around 13 years – Wario and Yoshi would take over starring duties, meaning Mario wouldn't lead again until New Super Mario Bros on the Nintendo DS. ■

FACT

In the first Space Zone level, the word 'HAPPY' is spelled out in stars, but it's too high up to see it without using a cheat cartridge – you can only see the 'Y' if you jump up to the left at one point.

SUPER RC PRO-AM

Year Publisher Developer 1991 Nintendo Rare

IN 1988, NINTENDO released the Rare-developed RC Pro-Am on the NES. The game was notable not only for its high quality (something that was commonplace with Rare games), but for being one of the first racing games to introduce weapons, a feature that would later find its way in numerous racing series, Mario Kart included. Super RC Pro-Am was an attempt to bring the game to the Game Boy, and the results were just as satisfying. The game is played from an isometric viewpoint, with the player taking control of a small radio-controlled car. You take part against three other cars, and the aim is essentially not to finish last: as long as you're 1st, 2nd or 3rd you can progress to the next race. Each race also has a car part lying somewhere on the track, and if you're able to collect it while racing it'll be applied to your car, improving either its top speed, acceleration or handling. You can also find a letter tile on each track, and if you can collect eight of these (spelling out 'Nintendo', conveniently) your humble 'RC Racer' car will upgrade to a Speed Demon. Do it again and you'll upgrade to the Spiker, the fastest car in the game. If you're lucky enough to have pals with

their own copies of the game, Super RC Pro-Am can be played by up to four players, making for arguably one of the better multiplayer experiences on the Game Boy. ■

FACT

RC Pro-Am on the NES didn't have an ending, because the tracks just kept repeating. In Super RC Pro- Am, however, if you collect 'NINTENDO' again when you have the fastest car, you do get an ending screen.

SUPER OFF ROAD

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Tradewest NMS Software

NO LONGER BOASTING the name of Ivan 'Ironman' Stewart on the cover like the earlier arcade, computer and console releases, the Game Boy version of Super Off Road has a similar vibe regardless. The aim, as in other versions, is to race against three other cars on a series of off-road tracks, each containing all manner of obstacles including bumps, jumps, mud pools and steep hills. By winning races in higher positions you earn money which can then be spent on improving your car and adding nitro boosts, which give you an edge when needed. Because the original version showed its entire tracks on one screen with tiny cars, the Game Boy's low resolution

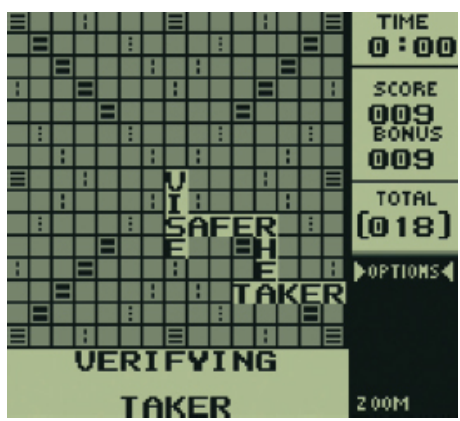
couldn't quite handle this, so instead the action is zoomed in with a scrolling screen. ■

FACT

The arcade version's CPU drivers all had names based on the development team: Madman Sam Powell (composer), Hurricane Earl Stratton (programmer) and Jammin' John Morgan (programmer).

SUPER SCRABBLE

Year 1991
Publisher Milton Bradley
Developer Imagineering



TOP TIP: IF someone ever asks you 'Super Scrabble?' you reply: 'Soup, please'. Roll your eyes, but such devastatingly clever wordplay would no doubt be appreciated by fans of Milton Bradley's iconic board game, recreated here in Game Boy form. The 'Super' element here is the ability to either play against a friend, against an AI opponent, or on your own in a Solitaire mode where you attempt to better your high score. The manual claims that the AI is so fast that 'a search of the 40,000+ word dictionary takes this cyborg mind less than one second', but that doesn't explain

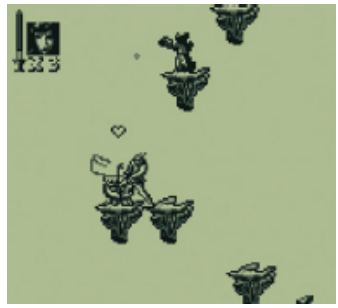
what it does for the rest of the time because it can sometimes take nearly a minute to make a move. ■

FACT

An actual board game called Super Scrabble was released in 2004. It increases the standard 15x15 board size to 21x21 and doubles the number of letter tiles.

SUPER STAR WARS: RETURN OF THE JEDI

Year 1995
Publisher Black Pearl Software
Developer Realtime Associates



THE NES GAMES based on *Star Wars* and *The Empire Strikes Back* both got Game Boy ports, but there was never an NES take on *Return of the Jedi* because the 16-bit era arrived and so the series started all over again with the Super Star Wars series. The Game Boy got a port of the third instalment (at least ensuring all three movies were represented on the handheld) but it's not identical to the SNES version. For starters, it cuts out a lot of the stages and removes some of the characters' abilities (Luke's Force powers, Leia's longrange attack, Chewie's spin). However, it does add a couple of things too, including a boss fight against Boba Fett, who isn't even in the SNES game. ■

FACT

The Game Boy version handles the SNES game's Mode 7 stages in various ways: replicating it (speeder bikes), going for a top-down view (*Millennium Falcon*) or ditching the stage entirely (landspeeder).

SUPERMAN

Year Publisher Developer 1997 Titus Software Titus Software

THE INFAMOUS N64 SUPERMAN game released in 1999 was so famously awful that over time it's generally been forgotten that the company responsible, Titus, released a Game Boy Superman game a couple of years earlier. In this side-scrolling action game, several citizens of Metropolis have disappeared without warning, and it's all down to a dodgy pact in which Lex Luthor is securing live human specimens and delivering them to alien villain the Preserver in exchange for secret interplanetary tech. It's up to Supes to fight through 10 stages taking in LexCorp, a spaceship and a submarine base. Titus's Game Boy offering was generally considered not great either, just not at the notorious depths that its console sibling would subsequently sink to. ■

FACT

In DC comics, the Preserver runs an intergalactic zoo with each creature in it being the last of its kind. He wants to capture Superman, the last Kryptonian, and make him an exhibit.

SWAMP THING

Year Publisher Developer 1992 THQ Equilibrium

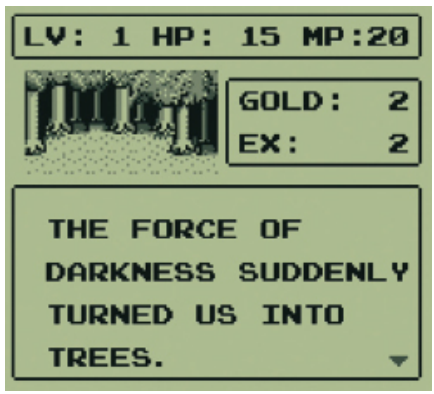
ALTHOUGH IT WAS released at around the same time as the NES game, the Game Boy version of Swamp Thing is an entirely different beast (so to speak). The evil Dr Arcane has released mutation serum into the atmosphere in order to turn the people of Earth into his army of Un-Men. The Un- Men are polluting the planet, which in turn makes Swamp Thing weaker, so off he trots to heal mutated creatures and recycle the garbage he finds scattered around. The game lets players choose between three different stages, each based on a different polluted environment: a desert, a forest and the Arctic. Only once he's recycled enough waste and healed enough creatures in all three areas can he then face Dr Arcane in the final battle. ■

FACT

Swamp Thing first appeared in 1971 in DC Comics' *House of Secrets* anthology series. In 1982 Wes Craven (*Scream*) directed a *Swamp Thing* movie starring Adrienne Barbeau (*The Fog*).

THE SWORD OF HOPE

Year Publisher Developer 1991 Kemco Kemco



A CROSS BETWEEN a point-and-click adventure and a dungeon crawler RPG, The Sword of Hope has you playing as Prince Theo as he tries to find the keys that will lead him to the titular sword, which is the only weapon that can defeat the possessed, corrupt king. Yes, it's one of those 'kill your dad' classics. The game's main interface is similar to that of early visual point-and-click games, where you move north, south, east and west between individual screens and use commands like Use, Open and Look to interact with whatever's in each area. Then, when an enemy approaches, the action switches to a turn-based RPG style where you see the enemy on the screen on its own, similar to Dragon Quest. ■

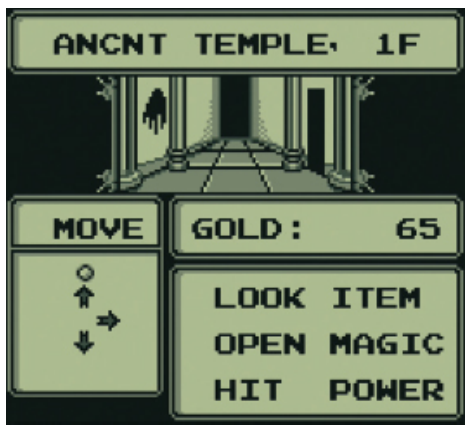
FACT

The maximum gold you can carry is 255. This is because the player's gold count is held on a single byte of data, which can only have 256

values (including zero).

THE SWORD OF HOPE II

Year Publisher Developer 1996 Kemco Kemco



FIVE YEARS HAVE passed since the events of The Sword of Hope, and things are looking dodgy again. A giant red bolt of light has shot across the sky, causing the Riccar Kingdom residents to get nervous due to a prophecy that suggested a red sky would mean ‘darkness awakens from eternal sleep’. Keen to reassure everyone, Prince Theo heads out to investigate, but it’s not long before things kick off again, with the Sword of Hope being stolen and an evil entity arisen. The sequel plays similarly to the original, but reception this time was more tepid, mainly because it felt outdated. It was originally released in Japan in 1992, so by the time it came to the west in 1996 it had more accomplished competition. ■

FACT

The series is called Selection in Japan. In 1998, both games were eventually released on a single cartridge called Selection I & II.

T2: THE ARCADE GAME

Year Publisher Developer 1992 LJN Beam Software

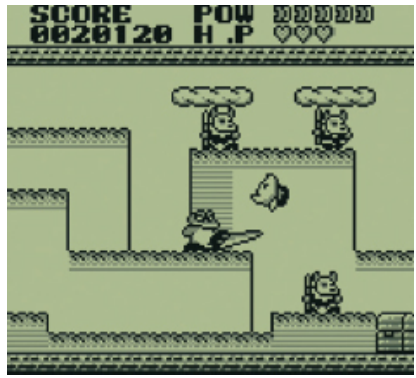
THERE WERE TWO Game Boy games based on *Terminator 2*. As the name suggests, this is a port of the arcade light gun game, minus its large machine gun controllers of course. As in the numerous other ports of the game, the aim is to shoot everything that moves as you blast your way through a future battlefield and reach Skynet HQ, then travel back to the present day to blow up Cyberdyne HQ and eventually defeat the T-1000. The Game Boy version is much easier than the others, but it could be argued that this is a benefit, given how the arcade original (like many arcade games) was designed to kill the player as quickly as possible so they'd put more money in.

FACT

Some of the music in the Game Boy version was taken from the arcade game Narc. Both arcade games were directed by the same person, George Petro.

TAIL 'GATOR

Year Publisher Developer 1991 Natsume Natsume



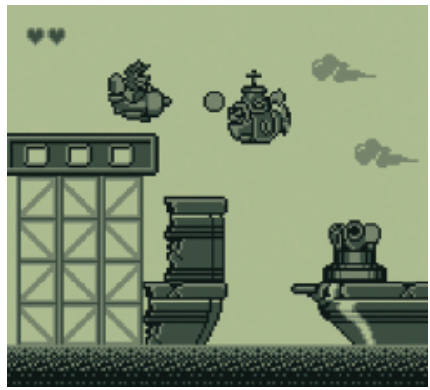
A CHARMING LITTLE platform game starring an alligator called Charly. An evil dragon called Basso Gila has taken over the kingdom of Moberry, so Charlie has to get rid of him and his animal army. The game initially consists of three worlds, each consisting of four stages – Air, Land, Cave and Underwater – which can be attempted in any order. You progress through each stage by collecting all the treasure chests, the last of which always has a key to the next room. Once you've cleared the stages in all three worlds, it's onto the final two sections where you explore Basso Gila's castle and attempt to tail-whip him into submission. Tail 'Gator is something of a hidden gem on the Game Boy, if a little easy. ■

FACT

If this game is familiar to you but you know it as Crocodile, congratulations: you've exposed yourself as naughty. The game was found in numerous multigame pirate cartridges under that name.

TALESPIN

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Capcom / Bandai Dual



A TELEVISION TIE-IN based on the Saturday morning Disney cartoon of the same name, TaleSpin has you controlling Baloo as he takes on a series of delivery missions, which ends up translating to 'shooting lots of things' because Shere Khan's Air Pirates are trying to stop him. The game is a shoot 'em up with some interesting gimmicks: when you move up or down you shoot diagonally (because the plane's nose points at an angle as the plane climbs and falls), and with the press of a button Baloo can fly upside-down, enabling him to shoot at enemies behind him. The Game Boy version is based on the NES game but while it plays very similarly, it messes around with the stage order and trims the levels down. ■

FACT

In the show, Baloo's boss Rebecca was based on Kirstie Alley's character of the same name in TV show *Cheers*, because she's a smart and headstrong but inexperienced manager.

TAMAGOTCHI

Year Publisher Developer 1997 Bandai Tom Create

THE FIRST TAMAGOTCHI was released in 1996 and kicked off the virtual pet craze of the late ‘90s. Rather than considering it a rival to other handheld devices, its creator Bandai instead decided to port it to the Game Boy, adding new features to ensure it was at least a different experience. Whereas actual Tamagotchis use a clock feature so its user has to take care of it 24/7, the Game Boy version instead saves your progress and stops when you turn the game off. To make up for this, days pass a lot quicker, meaning you can evolve your Tamagotchi faster than on the real thing. You can also watch three Tamagotchis at once and take part in extra mini-games (including races and beauty contests). ■

FACT

While real Tamagotchis let you scold your pet, the Game Boy version also lets you praise it, something added to actual Tamagotchis starting in 2004 with the Tamagotchi Connection line.

TARZAN: LORD OF THE JUNGLE

Year 1994
Publisher GameTek
Developer Eurocom

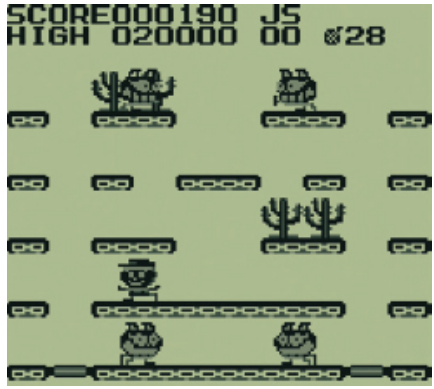
NOT TO BE confused with the Disney movie (or any other animated or liveaction adaptation of Tarzan, for that matter), Lord of the Jungle is an action platformer set over six stages, each with a different task. In the first, Tarzan's ape friend is ill so he has to collect ingredients for a cure. Then you have to find stolen gold from a crashed plane and return it to the natives, before putting out a fire and rescuing the animals it's trapped. The final free stages involve rescuing various creatures from a group of hunters: first it's baby elephants, whose tusks are being taken for ivory, then it's apes being shipped to the British Museum(?) and then it's Jane, who the hunters have just kidnapped out of spite. ■

FACT

The game's 1-Ups are in the shape of Tarzan's head. According to the manual, 'a powerful witch doctor made several tiny copies of your head and scattered them around the jungle'.

TASMANIA STORY

Year Publisher Developer 1991 FCI Unknown



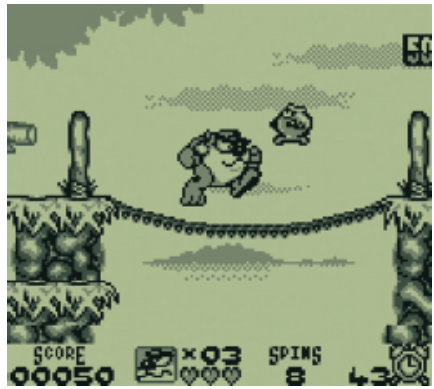
OF ALL THE movie tie-ins on the Game Boy, this is perhaps the most obscure, based on a Japanese film about Shoichi, an 11-year-old Japanese boy who visits his divorced father, who's now living in Australia and is obsessed with finding the extinct Tasmanian Tiger. In this westernised video game version, the boy is called Mike and he has to collect the plants on each stage while avoiding the four Tasmanian Devils trying to catch him. Mike can drop bombs to blow up the Devils (which is odd given the film's conservation theme), and can also use the springboards at the side of the screen to get around. The game is based on Pony Canyon's Fruit Panic, which itself was a knock-off of Namco's Mappy. ■

FACT

The movie was nominated for best soundtrack at the Japanese Academy Awards. The music was composed by Studio Ghibli regular Joe Hisashi.

TAZ-MANIA

Year 1994
Publisher Sunsoft
Developer David A Palmer Productions



AFTER BEING HELD captive in the ACME zoo, Taz has managed to break free. The Big Hat hunter is chasing after him, though, so he won't be truly safe until he can make his way through five islands – Christmas Island, Easter Island, Fantasy Island, Dark Island and Dodo Island – and have a final one-on-one confrontation with the helicopter-riding zookeeper. Taz can defeat enemies by jumping on their heads, but can of course also pull off his trademark spin to attack them too. The catch is that the number of spins Taz can perform is limited, and once he starts spinning he takes a while to stop, meaning it's probably not best to do it near smaller platforms or timingbased jumping sections. ■

FACT

In Europe, Sunsoft decided to make Taz- Mania a sequel to its Looney Tunes game, so it was renamed Looney Tunes 2: Tasmanian Devil in Island Chase.

TAZ-MANIA 2

Year 1993
Publisher THQ
Developer Beam Software

DESPITE BEING UNRELATED to the Sunsoft game, THQ decided to present its Taz-Mania game as a sequel (which is awkward, because Sunsoft's offering looks better). Taz's family have all been kidnapped, so Taz has to find them. The game takes place over four stages, with each seeing Taz rescuing a different family member: his dad in the jungle, his mum in the Condo Caves, his sister Molly in the mines and his brother Jake in the desert. Again, Taz can spin attack, but this time it can be performed at will with a gauge decreasing as you do. Although it's unrelated to the Taz-Mania game on Sega it's clear it was an influence, because some elements look familiar (such as the animation when Taz eats a bomb). ■

FACT

In case the situation in Europe wasn't confusing enough, this was released before Sunsoft's game in Europe, meaning it was simply renamed Taz-Mania because there was no first game.

TECMO BOWL

Year 1991
Publisher Tecmo
Developer Sculptured Software

THE TECMO BOWL series was generally believed to offer the best arcade-style American football gameplay in the 8-bit and 16-bit eras. The sole Game Boy version is based on the first NES game, and as such it only offers 12 teams to choose from, none of which are officially licensed with a real team name or logo. What it does boast, however, is the NFLPA licence, meaning that at least the players in those 12 teams have their real names: good news for fans of Dan Marino, Bernie Kosar, Joe Montana and the like. The most important thing is the gameplay, however, and in that respect players were happy, given that the Game Boy version plays just like the NES one. ■

FACT

Bo Jackson is notoriously the best, most overpowered player in Tecmo Bowl, but as of 2022 the real Bo Jackson, who received an NES and copy of the game at the time, has never played it.

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES: FALL OF THE FOOT CLAN

Year 1990
Publisher Ultra Games / Konami
Developer Konami

THE FIRST OF three TMNT games released on the Game Boy, Fall of the Foot Clan has the turtles trying to rescue April O'Neil from the clutches of the Shredder. It's a basic side-scrolling action game where players fight through five stages, each with a different TMNT villain as the boss: the city streets and sewers (Rocksteady), a factory (Bebop), a truck convoy (Baxter Stockman), a mountain cave (Shredder) and the Technodrome (Krang). You can choose to start on any level, but you'll only see the full ending if you start from Stage 1. Each turtle has one life, so if they lose it they're out of action (though you can revive them on rare occasions). ■

FACT

The game's music was composed by Michiru Yamane. She would eventually become best known for her soundtrack for Castlevania: Symphony of the Night.

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES II: BACK FROM THE SEWERS

Year 1991
Publisher Konami
Developer Konami

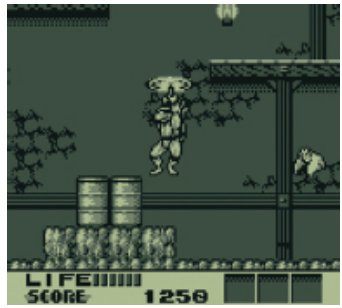
THE MANUAL FOR the second TMNT game seems to have already forgotten the first one existed. ‘This time [Shredder] has kidnapped ace reporter April O’Neil,’ it wails, as if that hadn’t already happened before. The sequel offers a mix of side-scrolling action as in its predecessor and beat ‘em up stages more like the TMNT arcade games. Once again, if your turtle runs out of energy you can’t use them again, and each time you finish a stage you get the option to play a ‘rescue stage’ where, if successful, you can revive one of them. If all four of your turtles are alive and kicking, you’ll instead get a bonus stage in which you have to catch as many pizzas as possible. ■

FACT

All three TMNT Game Boy games are included in Digital Eclipse’s excellent Cowabunga Collection from 2022, which comprises 13 TMNT games from the 8-bit and 16-bit era.

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES III: RADICAL RESCUE

Year 1993
Publisher Konami
Developer Konami



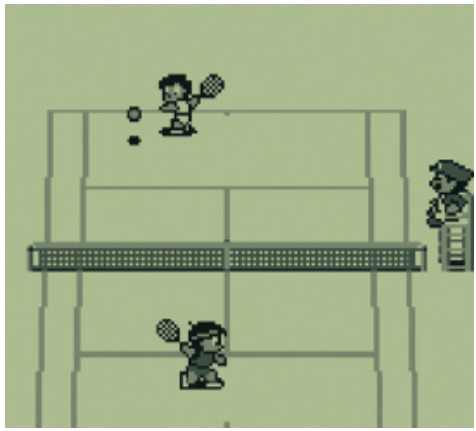
APRIL'S BEEN KIDNAPPED yet again, but this time she isn't alone: Shredder's also holding Splinter and three of the turtles hostage. The remaining turtle, Michaelangelo, heads off on a rescue mission: a radical one, no less. Rather than a linear action game, this hidden gem is more of a Metroidvania (from a time before 'vania started doing it) where you explore a large map. As in other Metroidvanias, there are some areas you initially can't access, but later you gain the ability to do so: in this case, by rescuing the other turtles. Leonardo can drill through weak floors, for example, Raphael can hide in his shell and squeeze through tight passages, and Donatello can climb walls. ■

FACT

The Japanese version's map makes the game easier: it highlights all the important areas to visit instead of letting you stumble upon them yourself.

TENNIS

Year 1989
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Nintendo



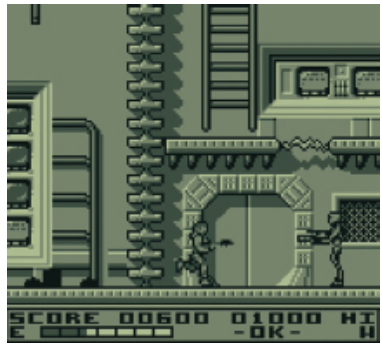
STRANGELY, THERE'S SOME consensus online that the Game Boy version of Tennis is a port of the NES version, when in reality the two games are clearly completely different. Both do at least have Mario as the umpire, and both share a bare-bones feature set, given how early each appeared in their respective systems' lives. There are four difficulty levels to choose from, determining not only how skilful the CPU player is but also how fast the players run and the ball moves. Other than the difficulty setting and the ability to turn music on and off, all you're left with is single exhibition matches, either against the CPU or against a friend with a Link Cable. ■

FACT

In one of the oddest bugs in a game, if you throw the ball up for a serve, miss it with your swing, then walk under it so it lands on your head, you automatically win the point.

TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY

Year Publisher Developer 1992 LJN Bits Studios



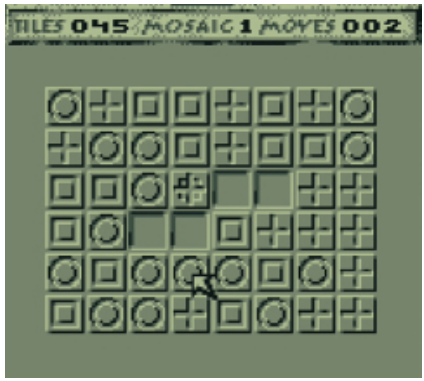
THE SECOND GAME Boy title based on T2 is unique to the handheld and features a range of gameplay styles for each stage. It starts as an action platformer where, in the future, John Connor has to destroy Skynet's defence shield beacons then infiltrate its HQ to find a T-800 to steal. Once you do this you switch to a puzzle game where you have to rearrange its circuits to program it. Then it's back to the present day, where you take part in the bike chase in the drainage canal before two more side-scrolling action scenes as Arnie's T-800 in the Cyberdyne Systems building and the steel mill, where you finally take down the T-1000 with a grenade launcher. ■

FACT

UK-based Bits Studios was told by the film studio that Sarah Connor's 'bangs' were too small. Because the term is 'fringe' in the UK, Bits didn't know what this meant so it kept making her breasts larger.

TESSERAE

Year 1993
Publisher GameTek
Developer Eurocom



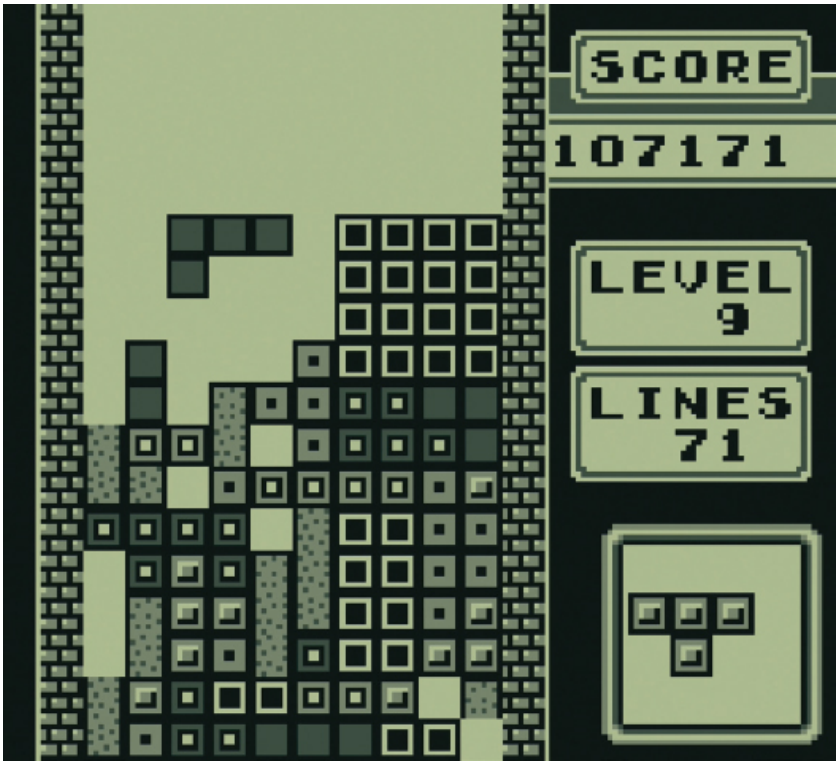
IN ITS ORIGINAL form as PC game Stained Glass, Tesserae is a bit easier to understand. Set on a grid with numerous coloured tiles, the aim is to try to remove as many tiles as possible. You do this by taking a tile and jumping it over an adjacent one: doing this removes the jumping tile's colour from it. For example, if you jump a yellow tile over another yellow one, it disappears, but if you jump it over an orange one the yellow is removed and it turns red. Given the Game Boy's clear lack of colour, Tesserae seems like a non-starter, but instead the game uses three shapes – a circle, a square and a plus – and uses combinations of these in place of the mixed colours. ■

FACT

The original version, Stained Glass, was developed by Kent Brewster. Brewster went on to build the front end for Netflix's original iPhone app, then worked as a software engineer for Pinterest for a decade.

TETRIS

Year 1989
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Nintendo



IT FEELS ODD to have to explain a game that has been bought and downloaded hundreds of millions of times since its creation, more than 35 million of which were on the Game Boy. But yet, here we are. Tetris is perhaps the ultimate definition of a ‘killer app’, a game that has the power to sell hardware purely because people want to play that game alone. Originally created by Russian developer Alexey Pajitnov in 1985, the game has since been ported to practically every system in existence, but it’s the Game Boy version that remains the most beloved (and Pajitnov’s favourite) version to this day. The simple aim – to move and rotate shapes as they drop down a well in order to create full lines, which are then removed – speaks to our inner desire to have order in our lives, and as a result there are few things more satisfying in video games than clearing one, two, three or even four lines at a time in Tetris. The Game Boy version includes two modes: the classic endless Game A, where you keep clearing lines until the game gets so fast and hard to control that the stack reaches the top of the screen; and Game B, where you choose a speed and a ‘Height’ and are given a mess of random

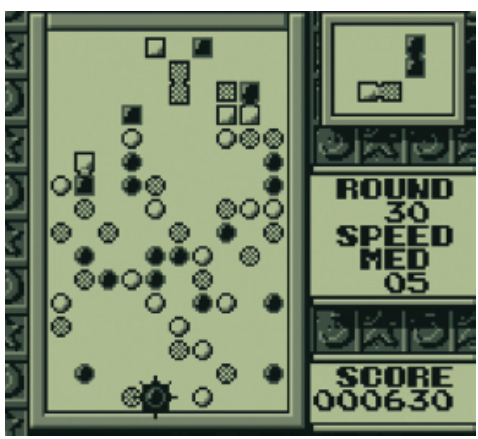
blocks that you have to work with to clear 25 lines. Many believe that Tetris is the ultimate game, and that Tetris on the Game Boy is the ultimate version. ■

FACT

The Game Boy Tetris most people know is Version 1.1. Version 1.0, which was part of a bundle in Japan and sold around 25,000 copies, has completely different music instead of the theme everyone associates with Tetris now.

TETRIS 2

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Nintendo Tose



IT WAS ALWAYS going to be impossible to better the original Tetris so Nintendo had something of an uphill battle with Tetris 2. The result was a game that practically nobody believed was better, but still stands on its own for offering something very different. Despite the name it actually plays more like Dr Mario, in that there are no lines to clear and players instead have to drop shapes made of different colours (well, shades), and matching three in a row makes them disappear. As in Dr Mario, each stage has a number of 'targets'

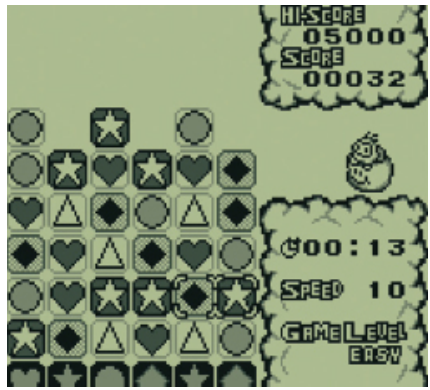
(flashing blocks here, instead of germs, hence the Japanese title Tetris Flash), and once each of these is removed the stage is cleared.

FACT

If you use a Super Game Boy, you'll want to track down a European version of Tetris 2. The North American release didn't have Super Game Boy support, but the EU version did.

TETRIS ATTACK

Year 1996
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Intelligent Systems



ANOTHER GAME WITH the Tetris name that doesn't have anything to do with the source material, Tetris Attack is actually a westernised version of Intelligent Systems' puzzle game Panel de Pon, with its fairy characters replaced with characters from Yoshi's Island. The game features a stack of blocks with different shapes on them, and again the aim is to match three of the same shape to make them disappear. The twist here is that the only way to arrange them is by placing your cursor (which is two blocks wide) on them, and pressing the A button to swap the two blocks it's lying

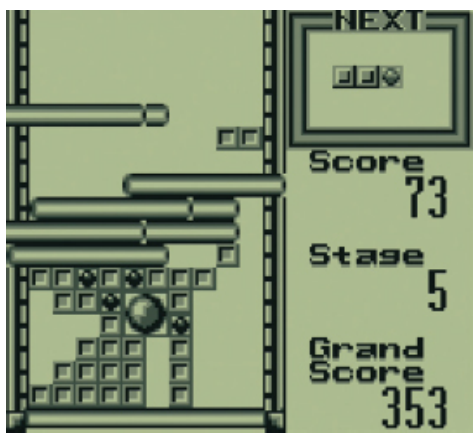
on. As well as an Endless mode, the Game Boy version includes Time Trial, Puzzle and Versus modes. ■

FACT

There are six hidden Super Game Boy borders, which you can find when selecting 1P on the menu while pressing Down + A, Left + A, Up + A, Down + Start, Left + Start or Up + Start.

TETRIS BLAST

Year Publisher Developer 1996 Nintendo Tose



OF ALL THE ‘Tetris but not Tetris’ games on the Game Boy, Tetris Blast is probably the closest to the actual thing. Known in Japan by the arguably more accurate title Bombliss, Tetris Blast follows the same rules as standard Tetris (albeit with the addition of twoblock and three-block shapes too), but then adds bombs to the mix. Each shape has at least one bomb embedded in it, and when you complete a line the number of bombs in that line determines how big the subsequent explosion is: if there’s only one the explosion isn’t even enough to clear the entire line, but if there are a few it can create large blasts that can wipe out large areas and even cause

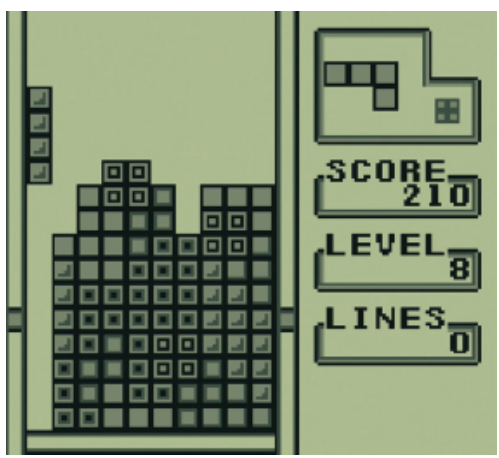
chain reactions. ■

FACT

Japan got an updated Game Boy Color version called Super Bombliss DX, which obviously presented the game in colour but also added a new Puzzle mode.

TETRIS PLUS

Year 1996
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Natsume



FINALLY, ANOTHER TETRIS game for the Game Boy that offers normal Tetris! Jaleco's take on the series offers a Classic mode, which plays like the original but has one twist: rather than the game level (i.e. block speed) increasing when you clear a set number of lines, here it increases over time, with line clears simply speeding up the process. There's also a separate Puzzle mode in which a character called the Professor is found standing atop the blocks. There's a goal at the bottom of the stage, and you have to clear lines to help him reach it, but you have to do it quickly because there's also a spiked roof slowly lowering down on top of

him. ■

FACT

The Professor can walk over a gap the size of a single block. Or, as the rather fat-shaming manual puts it, 'he's a bit pudgy'.

TINTIN IN TIBET

Year Publisher Developer 1994 Infogrames Bit Managers

TINTIN IN TIBET was the 20th volume in Belgian cartoonist Hergé's series *The Adventures of Tintin*. This video game adaptation follows the plot of the comic fairly closely, as Tintin explores Tibet in search of his friend Chang Chon- Chen, who's gone missing. The game is a straightforward platformer in which Tintin finds himself in a number of situations, from running alongside train tracks in China, to navigating the streets of Kathmandu, to eventually exploring a Tibetan cave while being pursued by a large Yeti. The game is a port of the SNES title of the same name, but while it's fairly accurate it doesn't replicate the SNES's two-plane gimmick where Tintin can switch between walking in the foreground and background. ■

FACT

If you press Left, Left, Left, Right, Left (as in the stereotypical drill sergeant march) during the game's copyright info you'll get a slideshow showing photos of the developers.

TINTIN: PRISONERS OF THE SUN

Year Publisher Developer 1995 Infogrames Bit Managers

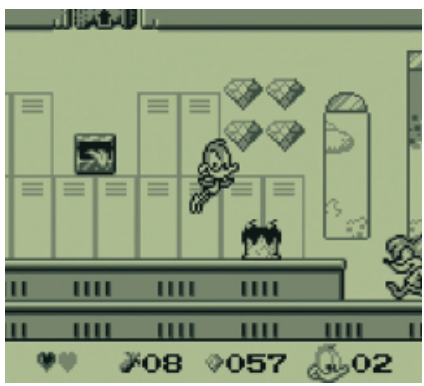
LIKE ITS PREDECESSOR, Prisoners of the Sun is based on another volume of Tintin comics by Hergé. This time Tintin is investigating a mystery illness which has affected a number of explorers upon their return from Peru. As he's looking into it, Tintin's friend Professor Calculus disappears, and so begins an adventure that takes Tintin deep into the heart of the Andes Cordillera. Although it's another action platformer, Prisoners of the Sun has a slower pace and introduces more exploration to the mix. It's another port of a SNES game and it's pretty faithful once again: this time it even replicates the two-plane mechanic, allowing Tintin to navigate past foreground and background obstacles by stepping to the side of them. ■

FACT

Prisoners of the Sun is actually the second part of a two-part story, which started with The Seven Crystal Balls. The game covers both parts.

TINY TOON ADVENTURES: BABS' BIG BREAK

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Konami Konami



BABS BUNNY DREAMS of being a big star, so she plans to head to the Acme Theater to learn the craft. The problem is, the mischievous Montana Max wants to take over the theatre so he can tear it down and turn it into his own private vault, so Babs doesn't realise she's walking straight into trouble. It's up to Buster Bunny, Plucky Duck and Hamton J Pig to try to catch to with Babs before it's too late. Babs' Big Break is a solid platforming adventure where each of the three playable characters has a different attack: Buster can throw carrots in an arc, Plucky throws pineapples that bounce off the ground and Hamton rolls watermelons at enemies. ■

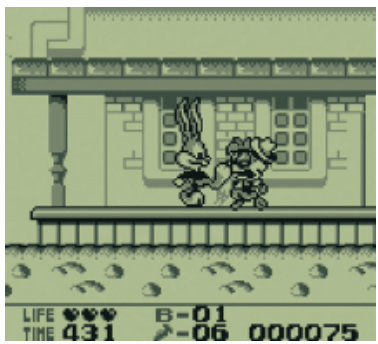
FACT

The Japanese version is easier. It gives you three energy hearts instead of two, and adds a password system which isn't present in the western

release.

TINY TOON ADVENTURES 2: MONTANA'S MOVIE MADNESS

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Konami Konami



MONTANA MAX HAS opened a brand new state of the art cinema, but there's just one thing about it: all the films it shows were created by Max himself and portray him as the hero, with Buster Bunny as the villain. Clearly not a fan of freedom of expression if it verges on libel, Buster decides to jump into the movies themselves and change the stories so that he can become the good guy. Cue a series of platforming stages with different movie genre themes, starting with a western and taking in Japanese samurai movies, films set in the future and monster flicks. Finally, it's off to the film studio where Buster faces off against Montana in a final showdown.

FACT

Despite being a Warner Bros IP, each stage opens with a parody of the roaring lion that opens many MGM movies, with Montana Max roaring instead of the lion.

TINY TOON ADVENTURES: WACKY SPORTS

Year Publisher Developer 1994 Konami Konami

DESPITE SHARING A similar name to Wacky Sports Challenge on the SNES, this features a completely different set of events. The main mode, Sports Festival, has you choosing either Buster or Babs and taking part in a series of sport-based mini-games: scoring runs in baseball, scoring touchdowns in American football, hitting panels on a wall in tennis, scoring goals in football, dunking in basketball and potting a ball in golf. You have to reach a certain score in each of these in order to qualify and move onto the next one. There's also a mode called Carnival which features two other mini-games: one where you have to collect water from a burst pipe, and a water gun shooting gallery. ■

FACT

The Konami Code comes into play in Wacky Sports. Enter it on the title screen and you can choose any sport to play, rather than having to qualify in each one in order.

TIP OFF

Year 1993
Publisher Imagineer
Developer Enigma Variations

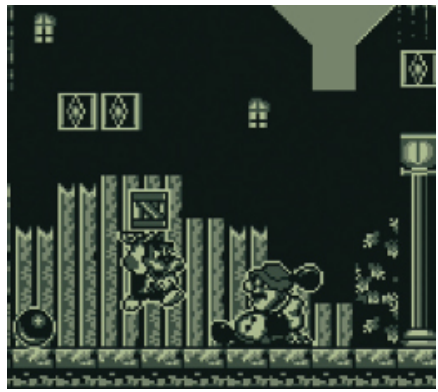
AS A RESULT of the success of its Kick Off series of football games, publisher Anco briefly tried branching it out to other sports, releasing Tip Off on computers before Imagineer brought it to the Game Boy. Although its name suggests it's a police informant simulation, Tip Off is actually a basketball game designed to do to B-Ball what Kick Off did to… um, F-Ball, offering a game where players have to pay attention just to retain possession.. Players can choose between a one-off Exhibition match, an eight-team tournament, a free throw competition or a practice mode to get to grips with the relatively loose controls. Teams are international rather than NBA imitations, so it's less Bulls vs Spurs and more Brits vs Spaniards. ■

FACT

Developer Enigma Variations changed its name numerous times over the course of a few years. You'll have also seen it in this book as Dark Technologies and Phoenix Interactive.

TITUS THE FOX

Year	1993
Publisher	Titus Software
Developer	Aqua Pacific



THIS PLATFORMER FROM French developer Titus has you playing as an anthropomorphic fox who has to travel to Marrakesh in search of his fiancee Foxy. Titus isn't very powerful, so he can't defeat enemies by jumping on them: instead, he has to pick up blocks and throw them to do damage. The game is based on an Amiga title but offers a rather cut-down experience, with fewer levels and the removal of boss fights. One thing the Game Boy version does add is a two-player co-op mode, where anyone armed with a Link Cable and a second copy of the game can team up with their friend, who plays as Titus's cousin Zorro (who conveniently looks identical to Titus). ■

FACT

Titus the Fox is a reskin of a platformer starring French comedian Lagaf, who released a dodgy parody song about an African girl getting arrested for robbing scooters (hence the Marrakesh setting).

TOM & JERRY

Year Publisher Developer

1992 Hi Tech Expressions
Beam Software

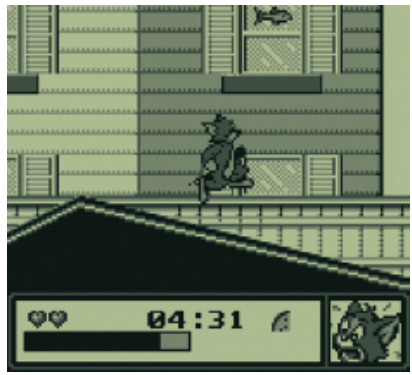
JERRY'S FAVOURITE COUSIN Tuffy is supposed to be visiting, but it's been hours since he was supposed to turn up and there's no sign of him. Jerry knows Tom has to be behind it, so he heads out to look for Tuffy. Thus begins a platformer that takes place across 10 stages – after roaming the streets, the park and the rooftops it's into Tom's house where you explore the lounge, the shower, the kitchen, the garage, the garden, the treetops and the bedroom. While there are numerous enemies and obstacles to avoid in each stage, naturally the main danger is Tom himself, who'll appear from behind various pieces of scenery – trash cans, couches and the like – to attack you. ■

FACT

The game ends with Tuffy actually saving the day. Tom catches Jerry, but Tuffy is standing on a shelf above him and drops a plate on his head, stunning him and letting Jerry run off.

TOM & JERRY: FRANTIC ANTICS

Year 1993
Publisher Hi Tech Expressions
Developer Beam Software



TWO OF THE most important rules in Tom & Jerry canon is that the two are bitter enemies, and they never talk. Both rules were broken in 1992 flop *Tom and Jerry: The Movie*, in which the pair not only speak extensively, but team up to rescue a girl called Robyn from her abusive aunt. Frantic Antics is a game based on the movie, and sees you playing as both Tom and Jerry as they make their way through 10 stages in search of the kidnapped Robyn. The game plays very similarly to the previous Tom & Jerry title on Game Boy, with the obvious difference that this time the Jerry stages don't have his new best friend Tom trying to attack him. ■

FACT

At the time of writing, the 1992 movie remains the first and only time Tom and Jerry spoke, because it was unanimously agreed to have been an awful idea.

TOP GUN: GUTS AND GLORY

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Konami Distinctive Software

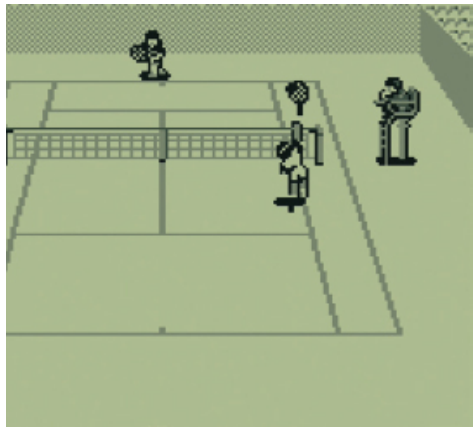
USUALLY WHEN YOU'VE got bogeys on your Game Boy screen it's because you've got a cold and aren't covering your nose when you sneeze, but Top Gun: Guts and Glory is an exception to the rule. Based on the movie, you can choose between five Air Combat missions, five Bombing Run missions, or a Career mode which combines five of each. There are four different planes to choose from, each with their own strengths and weaknesses: the MIG 29 (the most powerful), the F16 (the most agile), the F117A (can climb to the highest altitude) and the F14 (an all-rounder). You can arm yourself with either 20 heat-seeking 'fire and forget' missiles, or 30 radar-guided ones which require you to keep locked onto your enemy. ■

FACT

Your reward for beating the game is being promoted to instruct at Top Gun, so it's a good job it ends there because that would be a lot less exhilarating.

TOP RANK TENNIS

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Nintendo Pax Softnice



KNOWN AS TOP Ranking Tennis in Europe and Australia for some reason, this Nintendo-published tennis game shows how far Game Boy development had come in the four years since Tennis was released as a US launch title for the handheld. Whereas that was a barebones affair with one-off matches, Top Rank lets you take part in a lengthy career in which you start at rank 100 and have to make your way up the ranks, until you reach the top and earn a match with the legendary Master Joe. Doubles matches are also included (and are an option for career mode) and you can use a Link Cable to get a friend involved, either competitively or cooperatively in doubles. ■

FACT

Master Joe is proof that looks can be deceiving. He's 52 years old, 6'7" and 235 lbs, but as a former tennis instructor he's the strongest and fastest opponent in the game.

TORPEDO RANGE

Year 1996
Publisher Romstar
Developer SETA Corporation

A MASSIVE TERRORIST group called the Global Armed Alliance has taken over the air, sea and most of the world's major ports. You have to choose one of six home bases – USA, Soviet Union, UK, Australia, Canada or Japan – and head off in your submarine to regain control of the other five major ports to defeat the GAA. There are four different types of stage: a side-on stage where you fire missiles upwards to take out fighter jets and carriers, another side-on one where you fire at other submarines, a 3D one where your sub has surfaced and is taking on GAA cruisers, and another 3D one where you fight a GAA battleship. Succeed and you'll be able to upgrade your sub. ■

FACT

The Watara Supervision, a Game Boy knock-off handheld released in 1992, had a complete rip-off of Torpedo Range called P-52 Sea Battle, which was developed by Watara itself.

TOTAL CARNAGE

Year 1994
Publisher Malibu Games
Developer Unknown

THE SEQUEL TO Miday's popular arcade twin-stick shooter Smash TV, Total Carnage takes the action out of a futuristic game show and onto the battlefields of Kookistan, a nation currently under control by the evil General Akhboob and his mutant army. This one isn't very subtle, in case you couldn't tell. This Game Boy port does its best to replicate the arcade version but given its bombastic, over-the-top action and countless massive sprites it was always going to be a severely cut-down interpretation. The Game Boy version does at least introduce some new weapons, but one of them – a sort of forcefield thing which fires bullets in a tight circle around you instead of forwards – is profoundly useless.

FACT

The arcade version has a good or bad ending depending on whether you get all the prizes in the last stage. However, a bug means you get the bad ending no matter what.

TOXIC CRUSADERS

Year	1992
Publisher	Bandai
Developer	Realtime Associates

ONE OF THE odder movie-to-TV transitions, *Toxic Crusaders* was a children's cartoon based on the extremely gruesome, definitely not for children Toxic Avenger movies. Whereas the NES and Mega Drive games are beat 'em ups, the Game Boy version is a side-scrolling action platformer in which you choose between one of five characters – the hero Toxie or his friends Nozone, Major Disaster, Junkyard and Headbanger – as they try to stop the evil Dr Killemoff from polluting the peaceful town of Tromaville. Despite each character being rather visually distinct – from the mop-wielding Toxie to the werewolf-like Junkyard – they all play identically and essentially act as the game's five lives, because when one dies they're out for the rest of the game. ■

FACT

Toxic Crusaders was part of an odd run of '80s and '90s cartoons based on R-rated movies, including *Rambo, RoboCop*, *Highlander* and *Police Academy*.

TOY STORY

Year	1996
Publisher	Black Peak Software
Developer	Tiertex Design Studios

GIVEN ITS ICONIC status as the first ever animated movie made entirely in CGI, the video game version of *Toy Story* naturally used a similar technique to Donkey Kong Country in that the developers pre-rendered animations of actual 3D models then converted them into 2D sprites, to make the game look 3D like the movie. This 2D platformer follows the plot of the movie and has you playing as Woody as he explores Andy's room, Pizza Planet and Sid's room. Of all the versions of Toy Story the Game Boy one is the most limited: there are only 10 stages here compared to 18 in the Mega Drive version, with most of the gimmicky stages missing (like the first-person section inside the claw machine). ■

FACT

Woody's love interest Bo Peep was supposed to be Barbie, but Mattel thought the film would be a failure and refused. When it very much wasn't a failure, Barbie appeared in the sequel.

TRACK & FIELD

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Konami Konami

WHEN YOU THINK about Konami's Track & Field series, you think about the sort of frantic button-bashing that could break a controller, so a Game Boy port must have been a concern for players worried about the lifespan of their handheld. There are 11 events to choose from here – 100m dash, long jump, hammer throw, 110m hurdles, javelin throw, weightlifting, archery, triple jump, swimming, discus throw and pole vault – most of which involve hammering the A or B button as quickly as possible then using the D-Pad to throw, jump or what have you. As well as the ability to play a single event, there's also a Competition mode where you play every event and gain points. ■

FACT

The Japanese version was called Konamic Sports in Barcelona, referring to the 1992 Olympics. When it got a GBC re-release in the Konami GB Collection series, 'in Barcelona' was dropped (along with six events).

TRACK MEET

Year 1991
Publisher Interplay
Developer Interplay

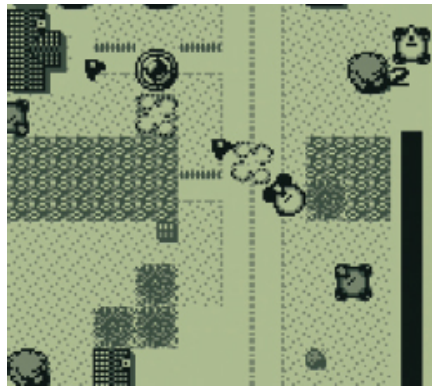
KONAMI WASN'T THE only show in town when it came to athletics games on the Game Boy. Interplay had a crack at it with Track Meet, offering less variety but a more light-hearted approach. There are seven events here – 100m, hurdles, javelin throw, pole vault, long jump, discus throw and weightlifting – and you can either practise an event solo or play them all in succession one-on-one against a series of CPU opponents. These start with the comically awful Ricky the Barbarian (who just dives through the pole vault bar while waving at you) and end with ten-year Track Meet champion Jack Strop, via the somewhat offensive Indian competitor Swami Pastrami who competes on a magic carpet. ■

FACT

If you enter your name as APPLEII, ads for the Apple II computer appear in the background while racing. One of the developers was clearly a fan.

TRAX

Year 1991
Publisher Electro Brain
Developer HAL Laboratory



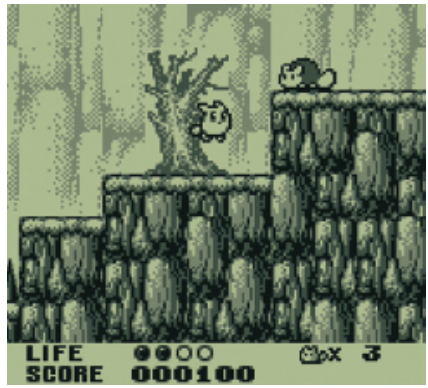
ONE DAY, WITHOUT warning, a peaceful village is attacked by the powerful Republic of Akuda. The villagers have never been the type for conflict, so the only ‘weapon’ available to them is a creaky, outdated tank with wheels instead of treads and a turret that can only turn to the right. Using this tiny tank, you have to play through the game’s four stages and defeat the king of Akuda and his forces. Fair play to Trax for integrating the game’s limitations into its plot, because your small rickety tank does indeed only have the ability to turn its gun one way: that said, the game’s four stages are manageable enough that this is never really an irritant. ■

FACT

If you fancy playing someone with similar turret-turning limitations, the game has a battle mode for up to four players. You can swap in CPU players if you don’t have enough humans.

TRIP WORLD

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Sunsoft Sunsoft



THIS SHORT BUT sweet Sunsoft platformer has you playing as Yakopoo, a little white rabbit-like creature who has to save the day when the Maita Flower – a beacon that makes sure Trip World remains peaceful – is stolen, throwing the land into turmoil. At any time players can transform Yapokoo into two different forms: a fish form (which helps him swim underwater but is useless on the ground) and a flying form (which turns his ears into wings and lets him flap around Kirby-style). He can also collect flower seeds which can be thrown at enemies: these are the citizens of Trip World turned evil by the Maita Flower's removal, so hitting them with a seed makes a flower appear on their head and turns them peaceful again. ■

FACT

In 2023, Limited Run Games re-released Trip World, as well as a new colourised version for Switch and Game Boy Color, and a special edition containing a plush Yakopoo.

TRUE LIES

Year Publisher Developer 1995 LJN Beam Software

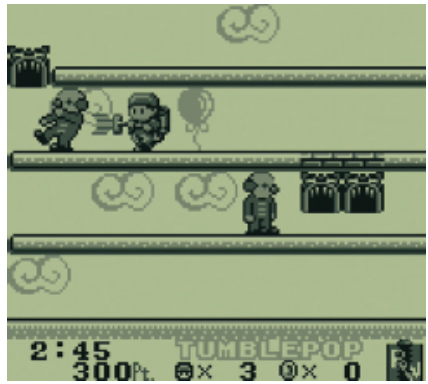
HARRY TASKER MAY look like your typical computer salesman (if your typical computer salesman is Arnold Schwarzenegger) but he's actually a top government agent. When a terrorist group threatens to blow up nukes on US soil, Harry has to stop them. Based on the Arnie movie of the same name, True Lies is a top-down action game consisting of six missions: a Swiss chateau, a snowy mountainside, a Washington mall, a park, the docks and finally an office party where the terrorists have Harry's daughter Dana held captive. Harry always has a (rather weak) pistol which is tricky to use against the game's fast-shooting enemies, but can collect machine guns, shotguns and grenades to improve his firepower should the need arise. ■

FACT

Enemies have limited line of sight in the game. If you see one, Harry can simply walk far enough away until they're off-screen then easily shoot and kill them without them firing back.

TUMBLEPOP

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Sunsoft Data East



ORIGINALLY RELEASED IN arcades by Data East in 1991, the original version of Tumblepop is arguably one of the best unofficial Ghostbusters games. Set in the distant future (the year 2018), you have to travel around a series of regions, sucking up enemies in a special vacuum cleaner. Each time you suck up a baddie, you then have to spit them back out again as a ball: if you don't do this quickly enough, they recover and attack you. The Game Boy version isn't identical to the arcade game: most notably, it's a much slower game to play. It also has a new world map section where you can choose which stages to play, as well as an in-game shop where you can buy power-ups. ■

FACT

Data East reused the arcade version's gameplay engine for a rather odd game called Diet Go Go, in which you have to shoot enemies to make them bloated, while avoiding eating food.

TURN AND BURN: THE F-14 DOGFIGHT SIMULATOR

Year 1992
Publisher Absolute Entertainment
Developer / Activision Imagineering

SOMETIMES A GAME'S title tells you everything you need to know, but let's proceed regardless. Turn and Burn is an F-14 dogfight simulator (told you), albeit one that takes things a little more seriously than similar games like Top Gun. You have to use your radar to detect and tag enemies before locating them, and also have to perform takeoff and landing manoeuvres, and even mid-air refuelling during some missions. Your F-14 is armed with 50mm machine guns, AIM-9 Sidewinder infrared missiles and AIM-54 Phoenix radar-guided missiles. Even if you fail your mission you still need to stay alert: as your plane goes down you have to eject, otherwise when you restart you'll need to go back to the previous mission. ■

FACT

There's a message from the game's designer Dan Kitchen in the manual, complete with an adorable photo of him in a bomber jacket, looking happy to just be there.

TUROK: BATTLE OF THE BIONOSAURS

Year 1997
Publisher Acclaim
Developer Bit Managers

THIS SPIN-OFF OF Turok: Dinosaur Hunter obviously isn't a first-person shooter like the series is known for, but is instead a more Game Boy friendly 2D action platformer. As in the first game, an evil overlord called the Campaigner wants to use an ancient artefact called the Chronoscepter to destroy the fabric of time, so Turok has to explore the Lost Land and collect the eight pieces of the Chronoscepter to scupper the Campaigner's plans. Initially armed with his trusty (but risky) knife, Turok can eventually collect other weapons like a Tek Bow, a variety of guns and alien weaponry like a fusion cannon or particle accelerator. The game's eight stages are inhabited not only by dinosaurs but aliens, killer plants, attack robots and the like. ■

FACT

Composer Alberto Jose González cites numerous C64 composers like Ben Daglish and Chris Huelsbeck as his influences, which is clear when you hear this game's soundtrack.

TURRICAN

Year 1991
Publisher Accolade
Developer The Code Monkeys

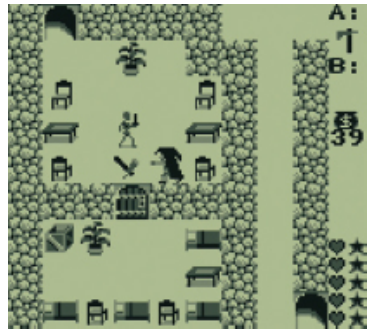
ORIGINALLY RELEASED ON the Commodore 64 home computer and hugely popular in Europe (especially in its enhanced Amiga form), Turrican would eventually get a Game Boy port that was reasonably handled given how fast and action-packed the original was. Playing as a mutant warrior called Turrican, you have to clear the colony of Alterra of its hostile organisms and destroy MORGUL, a powerful AI. Turrican's gun can be upgraded with multi-directional and laser functions, and he can also use other weapons like a lightning whip and mines. Oddly, because it was ported over from a computer game played with a single fire button, you can still press Up on the D-Pad to jump even though there's now a dedicated jump button. ■

FACT

Hidden in the game's code is a message that says 'The Code Monkeys eat jalapenos for breakfast'. Which I wouldn't necessarily advise.

ULTIMA: RUNES OF VIRTUE

Year 1992
Publisher FCI
Developer Origin Systems



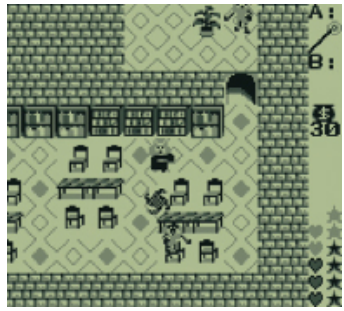
WHEREAS THE MAIN Ultima series focuses mainly on traditional turn-based role playing gameplay, Game Boy spin-off Runes of Virtue – which is considered non-canonical – is instead a more action-focused affair, which feels a little more like Gauntlet mixed with a top-down Zelda. The game is still set in Britannia, as the main series is, and has you playing as one of four characters – Mariah the mage, Iolo the bard, Dupre the fighter or Shamino the ranger – as they travel to all eight dungeons of the region in search of the titular Runes of Virtue, which must be retrieved to defeat the Black Knight. In a first for an Ultima title, the game also offers multiplayer, in which two players can work together to get all eight runes. ■

FACT

In the main Ultima series, Dupre is actually a paladin, not a fighter. You can imagine the whitehot anarchy among the fanbase when this emerged.

ULTIMA: RUNES OF VIRTUE II

Year Publisher Developer 1994 FCI Origin Systems



THE SECOND OF the Game Boy's Ultima games plays more or like its predecessor, with the same four characters to choose from and similar action-based controls. This time the Black Knight – who only features in these two Game Boy titles, incidentally – has returned and plans to kidnap the mayors of Britannia's eight main cities, starting with the mayor of the city of Britain, Lord Tholden. Off you trot, then, to rescue Lord Tholden and save the day. Runes of Virtue II has a larger world map this time (it's even larger than in the inferior SNES version), with longer dungeons and more NPCs to meet, making it the best of the two. A two-player mode is still included, too. ■

FACT

Although Runes of Virtue II again has you playing as a companion of the 'Avatar' from the main series, the character has the Avatar's ankh on their back and is referred to by NPCs as the Avatar.

ULTRA GOLF

Year	1992
Publisher	Ultra Games / Konami
Developer	Konami

KNOWN IN EUROPE as Konami Golf, there's no prizes for guessing that this is a golf game developed and published by Konami (albeit under its Ultra Games label in North America). There are two courses in the game, both of which can be played in the singleplayer Tournament mode. First you have to take part in a tournament on the Master Course, and have to at least get a result under par after 18 holes. Manage this, and it's onto the main tournament on the Champ Course where the winner takes home the championship. As well as a Practice mode where you can choose any hole you like, there's also Match Play and Stroke Play modes for two players, which only require one Game Boy. ■

FACT

The manual has an advice section called 'a little strategy that might prevent you from having a stroke'. I mean, I get the pun, but come on.

UNIVERSAL SOLDIER

Year Publisher Developer

1992 Accolade The Code Monkeys

DON'T LET THE name fool you: this is actually a port of Turrican II, renamed to tie in with the Jean-Claude Van Damme movie *Universal Soldier* (despite having very little to do with it). No longer are you playing as mutant warrior Turrican: his sprite has been replaced with that of a marine, and instead of fighting aliens and giant mech bosses you fight tanks and… um, giant Dolph Lundgrens, for some reason. It also means that some of the game's more organically unique stages have been replaced with stages set in the likes of Vietnam and Lundgren's character's enemy base. It's still a solid enough action game but it's generally agreed that the 'proper' Turrican 2 on other formats is superior. ■

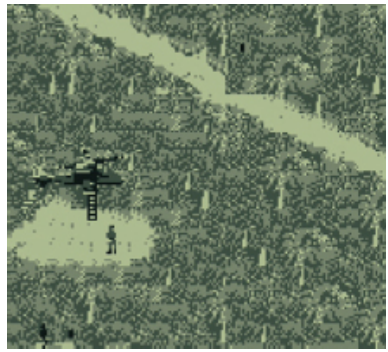
FACT

A SNES version of Universal Soldier was also planned but never released. An alpha prototype was leaked online years later.

URBAN STRIKE

Year Publisher Developer

1996 Black Pearl Software
Borta



IT IS THE year 2006 and millionaire media mogul H. R. Malone is winning over numerous Americans to his right-wing views (couldn't happen in real life, don't worry). Malone is secretly building a superweapon and plans to use it to bring down the US government, so it's up to the Strike team to bring him down. Urban Strike is the third game in the Strike series and, like Desert Strike and Jungle Strike before it, is reasonably handled on the Game Boy despite its limitations. The big addition in this entry is the ability to land your helicopter and carry out some missions on foot. However the Game Boy version is completely missing the game's San Francisco and New York stages, meaning much of the actual 'Urban' element has been removed. ■

FACT

The Game Boy version was developed by Borta Inc, a company founded by Ron Borta who previously headed up Atari third-party studio Roklan. Borta's chairman was Atari co-founder Nolan Bushnell.

V-RALLY: CHAMPIONSHIP EDITION

Year 1998
Publisher Ocean
Developer Velez & Dubail

BASED ON THE critically acclaimed PlayStation game, V-Rally lets you choose between four cars – a Peugeot 306 Maxi, Subaru Impreza, Ford Escort or Mitsubishi Lancer – and take on a series of road and dirt tracks across a variety of sunny, rainy and snowy conditions. It's not strictly a rally game because there are other cars on the road, but as long as you can get over that there's plenty here, with 10 tracks playable in two different modes, Arcade (against a timer) and Championship (for points). V-Rally is easily one of the better racing games on the Game Boy, but North Americans upset that it was only released in Europe shouldn't be too disheartened: it got a Game Boy Color port (see the next section). ■

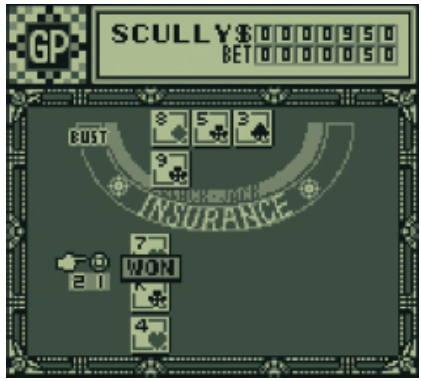
FACT

The game emulates drifting to an extent by making your car slide to the side as you come out of corners during rainy, snowy or dirt tracks, so you have to keep turning to stay stable.

VEGAS STAKES

Year Publisher Developer

1995 Nintendo HAL Laboratory



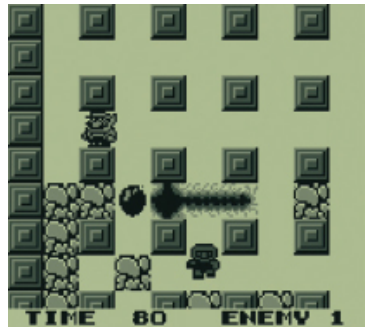
IT'S RARE THAT a casino game features much more than a selection of gambling games and little else, but Vegas Stakes at least attempts to put some sort of story and sense of progression in there among all the randomly generated numbers. At first you start at the Golden Paradise, a modest Vegas casino, and the aim is to play the included games – Blackjack, Roulette, Craps, Slots and Poker – to earn enough money to reach the cool techno casino The 2020, and then finally reach the Laurel Palace, the ultimate casino that's definitely nothing to do with Caesar. Beware, though: if your luck runs out at the Golden Paradise you'll be headed to the Hideaway, a rundown casino with $1 wagers, to rebuild your bankroll. ■

FACT

The SNES version has an extra casino, the midtier Buffalo Head, so if you're craving that 'not doing great, not doing terribly' vibe you might want to play on console instead.

WARIO BLAST: FEATURING BOMBERMAN!

Year 1994 *Publisher* Nintendo *Developer* Hudson Soft



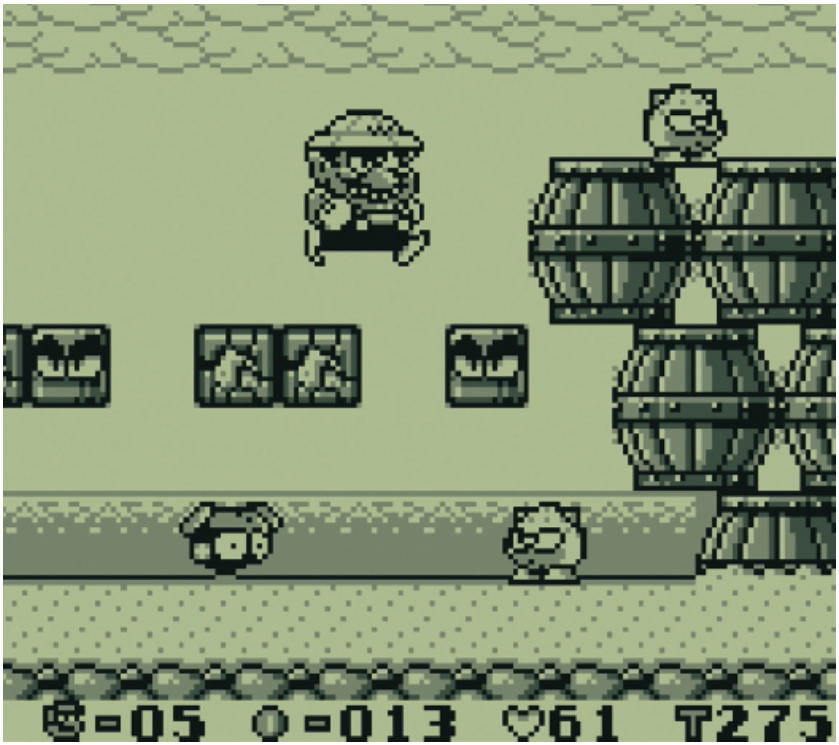
EARLIER IN 1994, Hudson released Bomberman GB in Japan (not to be confused with the one released in the west, which was actually Bomberman GB 2). It had a single-player mode which played a lot like Bomberman multiplayer, in that you had to defeat 1–3 opponents who all looked like Bomberman too. When the game came to the west, Nintendo and Hudson decided to team up and add the increasingly popular Wario to the mix. Now players can choose between either Wario or Bomberman, and have to defeat clone versions of the other character. The game also has a multiplayer mode for 1–4 players, but it can only be played on a Super Game Boy using a SNES multitap. ■

FACT

Mario was originally going to be in the game but Nintendo felt having Mario running around and planting bombs felt a bit off, so proposed that Wario be added instead.

WARIO LAND: SUPER MARIO LAND 3

Year Publisher Developer 1994 Nintendo Nintendo



ALTHOUGH SUPER MARIO Land 2 was an undoubted success, it was the popularity of its new enemy Wario that led to Nintendo making the surprise decision to bin Mario as the star of the series and steer it in a new direction, one where players get to control an anti-hero for once. After he loses control of Mario's castle at the end of the previous game, Wario decides he wants to get a castle of his own. Notorious pirate Captain Syrup and her Brown Sugar Pirates have stolen a golden statue of Princess Toadstool, so Wario reckons if he can steal the statue from them he can sell it and make a small fortune, enough to buy a new castle. Wario Land differs from previous Super Mario games in that Wario is an absolute unit. Whereas a simple Goomba is enough to harm Mario, in Wario Land you can just walk into the smaller enemies without a care in the world: instead, they serve as ammo, with Wario able to pick them up and throw them at other, potentially more dangerous enemies. Ultimately, this being a Nintendo game, being a bad guy does still have consequences, and Mario ends up recovering the statue anyway. Wario's still been collecting coins and treasure the whole

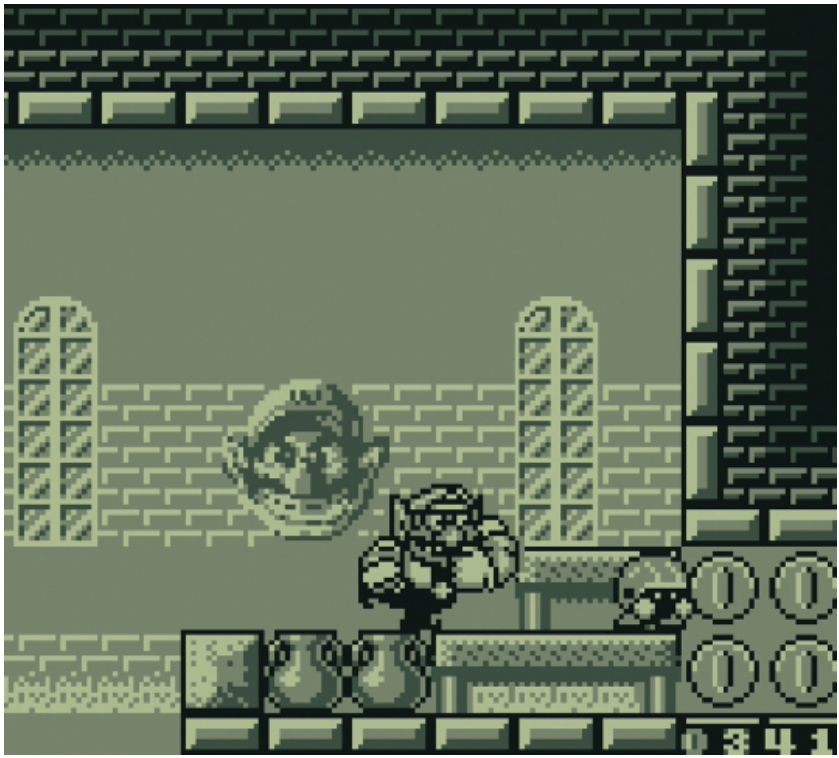
time, though, so the game's ending is determined by how big Wario's haul is, with his final 'castle' ranging from the likes of a birdhouse or a hole in a tree trunk to an entire planet with his face on it. ■

FACT

The design of Wario was based on two iconic characters: Popeye's nemesis Bluto, and the evil circus owner Stromboli in Disney's version of *Pinocchio*.

WARIO LAND II

Year	*Publisher*	*Developer*
1998	Nintendo	Nintendo



CLEARLY DECIDING TO pretend that 1995's Virtual Boy Wario Land didn't exist, Wario Land II is considered by Nintendo to be the second game in the series. Still annoyed at Wario's attempts to steal from them, Captain Syrup and her crew decide to break into his castle while he's sleeping and give him a taste of his own medicine by nicking all his treasures. When he wakes up, he's naturally none too pleased, so he heads out to retrieve his riches. In the first Wario Land our hero was extremely tough but could still be killed if he got enough pointy things in his rump: this time Wario is practically invincible, with the most powerful enemies merely knocking him back and causing him to lose coins. This may not sound like much fun, but the game turns it into a sort of puzzle mechanic, because some enemies inflict a status on Wario when they hit him: if a zombie bites him, for example, he'll turn into a zombie too, which lets him fall through some floors. The aim in some stages, then, is to deliberately take hits from certain enemies and use the 'powers' gained as a result to reach previously inaccessible areas. The game's replay value comes in its wide range of hidden exits: although there

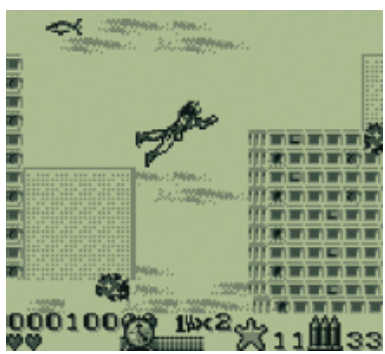
are 50 stages in the game, you'll only ever play through 25 in a single playthrough, meaning multiple routes are necessary to see everything Wario Land II has to offer. ■

FACT

If you manage to collect every piece of treasure and win every map piece, you can unlock a remake of Game & Watch game Flagman starring a D.D. enemy from the game.

WATERWORLD

Year Publisher Developer 1995 Ocean PAM Development



THE *WATERWORLD* MOVIE may have gone down in history as one of the biggest box office flops of all time, but it did at least result in this half-decent Game Boy game. Playing as the Mariner (Kevin Costner's character in the film), you play through seven levels, each with multiple stages, as you try to reach and defeat the evil Deacon and find dry land for your people to live on. The game initially starts with a series of underwater swimming sections (similar to the notorious underwater stage in Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles on the NES) but eventually alternates between standard 2D action platformer sections and isometric sailing sections where you explore

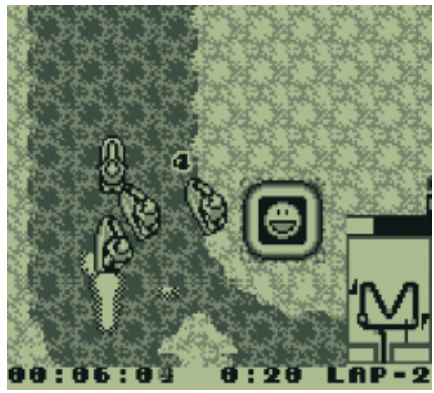
your environment in a raft. ■

FACT

Waterworld was originally supposed to be 175 minutes long but was cut to 135, leaving out a lot of backstory. An extended TV version reinstated the missing 40 minutes, and was later released on Blu-ray in 2019.

WAVE RACE

Year 1992
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Pax Softnica



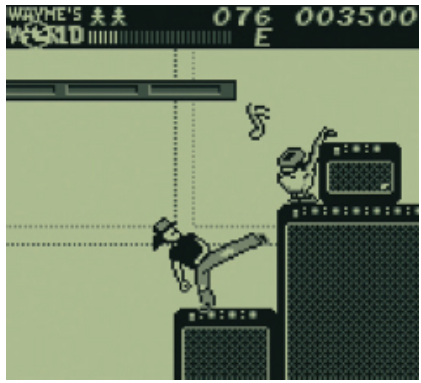
THERE ARE SOME who believe the Wave Race series started with Wave Race 64 on the Nintendo 64, but that was the second in the series. The first, released four years earlier, was this Game Boy racing game which is played from a top-down perspective. There are two modes to choose from in the original Wave Race, a Race mode (where you have to pass through checkpoints and beat each lap within a certain time limit) and a Slalom mode (where you gain points for passing between posts and win if you have the most points by the end of the race). The N64 sequel may have become more iconic, especially because of its pioneering wave physics, but it's always worth remembering it started here first. ■

FACT

It's possible to grab a dolphin while racing, which helps you turn sharper. Dolphins would become a recurring theme in the series: you can unlock the ability to race on one in Wave Race 64.

WAYNE'S WORLD

Year 1993
Publisher THQ
Developer Radical Entertainment



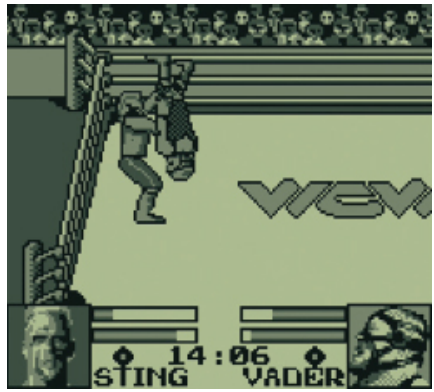
THE ICONIC *SATURDAY Night Live* sketch turned movie got its fair share of video game tie-ins, and while this Game Boy offering looks just like the NES game at first glance (and at first play) the level design is completely different, essentially making it a separate game. A producer from Chicago is trying to buy out the Wayne's World show and wants to win over Wayne's girlfriend on top of that, so Wayne and Garth head out to save it in an action platformer taking place over five stages: Kramer's Music Store, the Gasworks nightclub, an alleyway outside the club, the producer's studio in Chicago and finally the producer's condo. While Wayne can perform karate moves, Garth is more no-nonsense and has a taser. ■

FACT

If you pause the game, hold B and A and enter Left, Left, Select (BALLS), you can skip to the next level. Spell out BRASSBAR instead and you'll see an unused level with a neat 3D effect.

WCW: THE MAIN EVENT

Year Publisher Developer 1994 FCI Beam Software



THE GAME BOY got a host of WWF games (as you'll soon see) but fans of its rival WCW would instead get this solitary effort. There are nine playable wrestlers to choose from, including Sting, Rick Rude, Johnny B Badd, Big Van Vader, Rick Steiner and Scott Steiner. The other three – Stunning Steve Austin, Rom Simmons (aka Farooq) and Dustin Rhodes (aka Goldust) would make it big at the WWF in the future but made their video game debuts here. Each wrestler has their own signature move, which wasn't always a guarantee in this era of wrestling games, and their big chunky cartoon sprites made them easily distinguishable. The game's limited moveset and relative lack of modes, however, mean it's aged a little these days. ■

FACT

The Steiner Brothers had already left WCW for the WWF more than a year before this game was released, but somehow managed to remain in the game despite this.

WE'RE BACK! A DINOSAUR'S STORY

Year 1993
Publisher Laser Beam / Hi Tech Expressions
Developer Beam Software

BASED ON THE Universal Pictures animated movie starring John Goodman, We're Back! is a platformer consisting of five worlds, in which you play as a dinosaur called Rex as he tries to rescue his human friends, Louie and Cecilia. While functional enough, We're Back is perhaps more notable for the games it's related to. Not only was the 16- bit version the predecessor to Beam Software's more popular Radical Rex, the Game Boy version was notorious for being reskinned and renamed in numerous different regions. If you lived in the US or part of Europe it was We're Back, Sweden got Bamse (starring a little bear), the rest of Europe got Baby T-Rex (without any movie branding), and Australia got Agro Soar (starring a popular children's puppet). ■

FACT

A fifth version of the game was planned for the UK, and would star BBC children's TV character Edd the Duck. It was never completed, so just the four then.

WHEEL OF FORTUNE

Year Publisher Developer 1990 GameTek Data Design Interactive

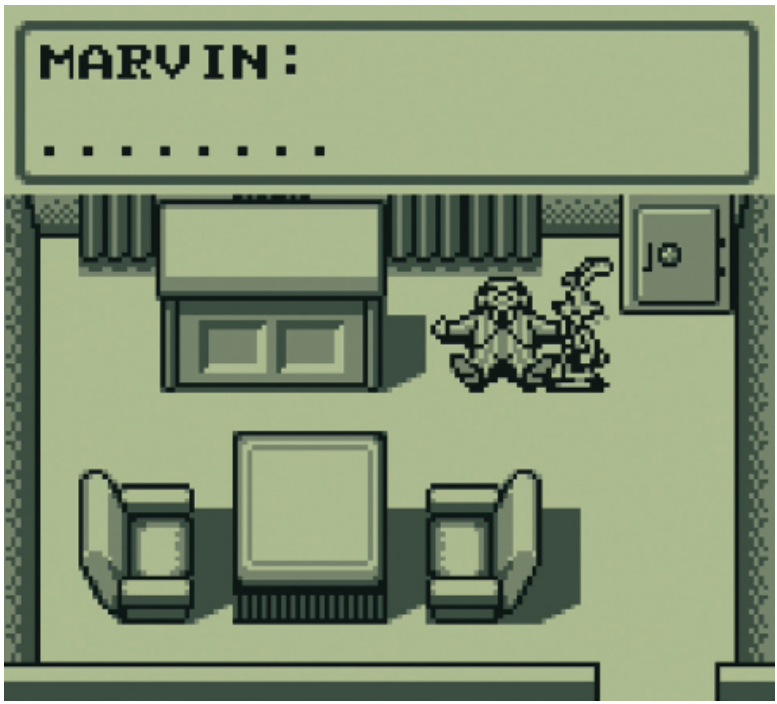
MUCH LIKE GAMETEK'S range of Jeopardy! games, a Wheel of Fortune video game was a no-brainer given how successful the game show was in the US and how simple the format is. Playing either alone, against a friend or against a CPU opponent, you have to spin the wheel and guess letters to complete words or phrases, with more than 1,000 possible answers. Given that it was released in 1990, it goes without saying that some of these answers are a little outdated and therefore a little harder to guess decades later: that is, unless the likes of 'DAVID BRINKLEY', 'THE MASK OF FU MANCHU' and 'CHANCELLOR HELMUT KOHL' still feature regularly among the memories in your brain's filing cabinet. ■

FACT

If you can't figure it out, the answer in the screenshot is 'AN ALBATROSS AROUND MY NECK'.

WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT?

Year Publisher Developer 1991 Capcom Capcom



GIVEN THAT THESE days he's synonymous with the Resident Evil games – he directed the first game and its remake, directed Resi 4 and produced Resi 2 and 3 – legendary game developer Shinji Mikami's first designer credit may come as something of a surprise. When he joined Capcom 1990 the company was making the most of its Disney licence, so following a brief stint on a quiz game Mikami was tasked with designing a game based on the 1988 movie *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*. Rather than a typical action game, Roger Rabbit on Game Boy instead leans on the whodunnit theme of the movie, offering players a top-down adventure game in which players control Roger as he tries to rescue his wife Jessica from Judge Doom, while also trying to retrieve the will of the recently assassinated Marvin Acme. While there's still some action to be

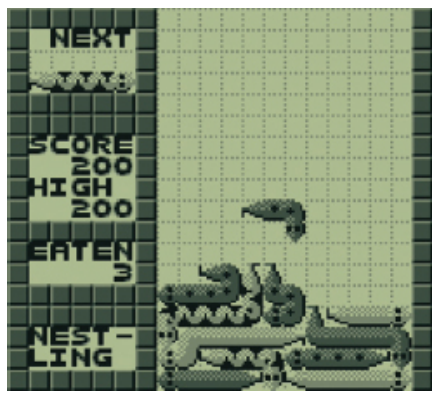
found – Roger can still be killed and can arm himself with weapons – much of the game involves wandering the environment, talking to NPCs and collecting items to be used at appropriate moments (such as using a password to enter the Ink & Paint Club). While Mikami would go on to become known as one of the most notable horror game designers, Who Framed Roger Rabbit is a game from his past that shouldn't be forgotten, as it delivered not only an enjoyable adventure but one of the few examples of a Game Boy game that reviewed much better than its NES equivalent. ■

FACT

Terry Gilliam was once asked to direct the movie, but turned it down saying he thought it would be too difficult. He's since called his decision 'pure laziness', saying he regrets it.

WILDSNAKE

Year 1994
Publisher Spectrum HoloByte
Developer Bullet-Proof Software



WHEN YOU'RE DESPERATELY trying to find the 'next' Tetris, you'll do anything you can to get noticed. Spectrum Holobyte did this by slapping 'Alexey Pajitnov, creator of Tetris, introduces…' on the box

of WildSnake. In reality, Pajitnov had nothing to do with the game's design, which is somewhat clear when you play it. It's essentially a variation on Tetris in which the blocks are replaced by snakes, which you can slither around to make different shapes as they fall. Creating a complete horizontal line of snakes does nothing in this game: instead you have to make two snakes of the same colour touch each other, which makes them both disappear. Given the Game Boy's lack of colour, the snakes are instead patterned. ■

FACT

WildSnake has Super Game Boy functionality, but if you were hoping it would give every snake its own distinct colour and make the game easier to play, that's not the case.

WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES: LILLEHAMMER 94

Year 1994
Publisher US Gold
Developer Unexpected Development

THE OFFICIAL VIDEO game of the 17th Winter Olympic Games in Lillehammer, Norway was handled by a number of developers, meaning each system got a somewhat different game. The Game Boy version offers seven events, fewer than any other version (including the Sega Game Gear): downhill skiing, slalom skiing, bobsleigh, the biathlon, short track speed skating, ski jumping and

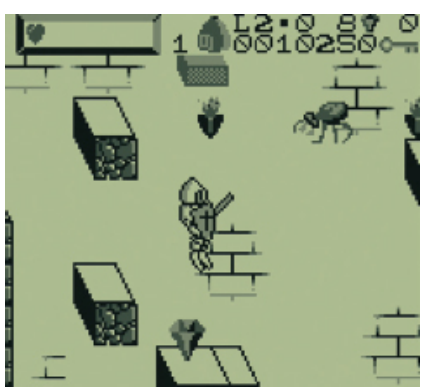
freestyle moguls. After choosing your country you can choose to practise any of the events at will, or take part in the Olympics mode where you can play every event in a row. Should you have a specific love or hatred for the downhill events, you can also choose a modified Olympics mode where you can play only downhill events, or only nondownhill ones. ■

FACT

Russia got the most gold medals in Lillehammer 94, but if you only count the events featured in this game it would be a tie between the US, Germany, Switzerland, Canada and Norway.

WIZARDS & WARRIORS X: THE FORTRESS OF FEAR

Year Publisher Developer 1990 Acclaim Rare



DON'T BE CONCERNED by the bewildering title: Wizards & Warriors X isn't actually the tenth game in the series, and is instead a spin-off released in between the second and third NES adventures. Set a rather precise 17 years after the events of the second game, our hero Kuros discovers that Princess Elaine has disappeared without a trace. Suspecting that the evil wizard Malkil is behind it,

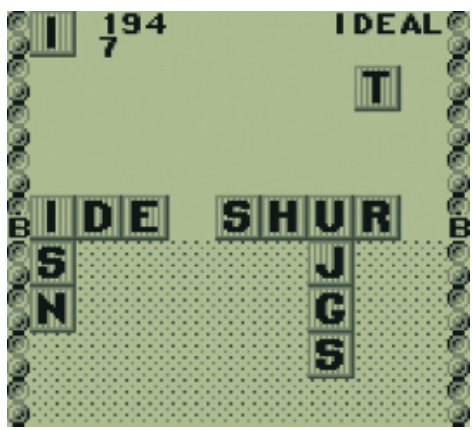
Kuros heads to the Fortress of Fear, where he (rightly) reckons she's been taken. Like the NES games it's based on, Wizards & Warriors X is an action platformer, but it's somewhat more linear than its console siblings, with less exploration and more focus on combat, making it more suitable for handheld play. ■

FACT

Despite the title, there's only really one wizard (Malkil) and one warrior (Kuros) throughout the entire series of four games.

WORDTRIS

Year 1992
Publisher Spectrum HoloByte
Developer Realtime Associates



ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO make the Tetris lightning strike twice, Wordtris replaces the typical Tetris blocks with letters, similar to Scrabble tiles. Rather than clearing lines, the player has to drop the letters onto the playing area and attempt to form words using them. If a word of three or more letters (four or more in Expert difficulty) is created and the game considers it valid, the letters will be cleared from the board. There's also a Magic Word, which is always shown

at the top of the screen: if you can manage to plan well enough to spell out the Magic Word, you'll clear the entire playing area and get a massive points bonus. ■

FACT

Wordtris co-designer Armen Sarkissian would later become president of Armenia: no other game can boast that, unless Serzh Sargsyan secretly programmed WCW: The Main Event.

WORDZAP

Year 1992
Publisher Jaleco
Developer Realtime Associates

WHAT DO YOU get when you take Boggle and add a little more action? The answer, you'll be unsurprised to hear, is WordZap. The game's main mode is a two-player competition (against either another player with the Link Cable or the CPU) in which players are given the same set of letters and have to be the first to make seven different words out of them. The twist is that if both players come up with the same word, that word is 'zapped' and removed from both lists: this means you not only have to find seven words, they all have to be unique words your opponent hasn't found yet. There's

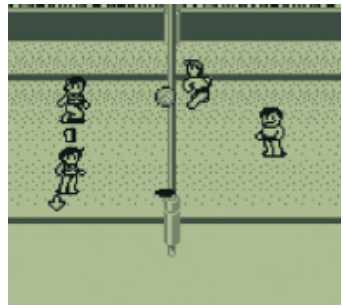
also a separate singleplayer mode called WordHai where players have to use up every letter on their rack. ■

FACT

The game has a dictionary of more than 10,000 words, but the Oxford English Dictionary estimates that there are around 170,000 words in current use.

WORLD BEACH VOLLEY: 1992 GB CUP

Year Publisher Developer 1992 Taito Graphic Research



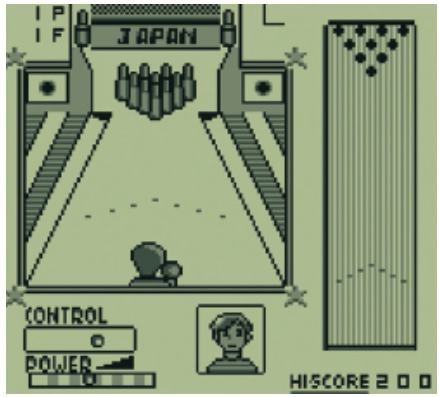
OF ALL THE volleyball games released in the 8-bit and 16-bit era, this holds up pretty well compared to the competition. Six countries are represented here – Japan, China, Australia, Brazil, USA and Russia – and you can choose to play 1v1 or 2v2 exhibition games using any combination of the four players in each country's roster (essentially meaning you have 24 characters to choose from). Once you feel ready to properly compete, there's the Tournament mode, where you choose from four different players – Jonney, Buloon, Kasumi and Cindy – and take on a series of two-person teams in an attempt to win the 1992 GB Cup. Or the 1991 GB Cup, if you bought the Japanese version, which was released a year earlier. ■

FACT

Each of the four playable Tournament characters has a brief description summing up their skills. Jonney has ‘magical toss work’, which in Britain sounds a lot ruder than intended.

WORLD BOWLING

Year Publisher Developer 1990 Romstar Athena



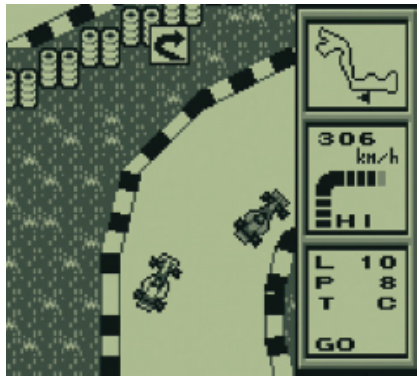
IF YOU’RE LOOKING for a ten-pin bowling game for your Game Boy, you don’t really have much choice (at least in terms of western releases). World Bowling is the only game of its type released on the original Game Boy, and lets you take your bowling pursuit global. After choosing either a male or female player and selecting a ball weight, it’s onto the first round in Japan. If you can score 200 points or more – no mean feat – you then move onto China, where you have to score 210. The game continues in this way, with the player visiting the USA, Canada and France before finally making it to England, where a score of 250 or more is needed to win the championship. ■

FACT

Bowling is thought to date back to around 3200 BC. In 1895, a child's game from that period including nine skittle-like objects and some balls was found during an excavation in Egypt.

WORLD CIRCUIT SERIES

Year Published 1992
Developer Ultra Games / Konami
Konami



AS PART OF its attempt to make video games based on every sport imaginable, Konami also tried its hand at a Formula 1 game with World Circuit Series. Players can choose to race in either the Formula 3, Formula 3000 or Formula 1 divisions, and can either play a Practice Race (which is essentially a time trial), a Single Race (where you race some laps to determine your grid position then race against others) or the main Series Circuit mode, where you take part in five, eight or 16 races depending on the division you've chosen. The game is played from an overhead perspective and is very much a fast-paced arcade style game, though you can tweak your car's engine, transmission, downforce and tyres. ■

FACT

Formula 3000 was created in 1985 to be the final step before F1.

Before it was scrapped in 2004, three F3000 winners went on to win an F1 Grand Prix: Jean Alesi, Olivier Panis and Juan Pablo Montoya.

WORLD CUP USA 94

Year Publisher Developer 1994 US Gold Tiertex Design Studios

THE 1994 WORLD CUP was held in the US in an attempt to make the sport more popular in North America, a need made all the more obvious by the fact that the official Game Boy game of the tournament wasn't even released there. All 24 teams who qualified for the real-life tournament are in here, and there's a World Cup mode that features the same groups and fixtures from the real event, making everything as authentic as possible (other than the player names, which are all completely made up). USA 94 was as notorious for the teams that didn't qualify, however, so eight of these teams – Scotland, England, Wales, France, Australia, Denmark, Japan and Portugal – are also in the game and can be swapped in. ■

FACT

USA 94 was the first World Cup to feature the back-pass rule, which was introduced after World Cup Italia 90. In that tournament, Ireland's Pat Bonner held the ball for a total of six minutes in one

match.

WORLD CUP 98

Year Publisher Developer 1998 THQ Tiertex Design Studios

BY THE TIME the 1998 World Cup in France had arrived, the rights to make World Cup video games had moved over to EA, a no-brainer given its success with the FIFA series. The Game Boy version of World Cup 98 is essentially a modified version of that year's annual FIFA release, FIFA: Road to World Cup 98, right down to the same 50-odd teams (it even has the bonus team, the THQ Tornados). One thing it does feature, however – like the USA 94 game before it – is the option to play a full World Cup with all the correct groups and fixtures. Whereas the 'main' versions of the game on PlayStation, N64 and the like had real player names, however, they remain fictional here. ■

FACT

World Cup 98 was won by France, making them the sixth team to win the trophy on their own home soil (and, at the time of writing, the last).

WORLD HEROES 2 JET

Year Publisher Developer 1995 Takara Takara

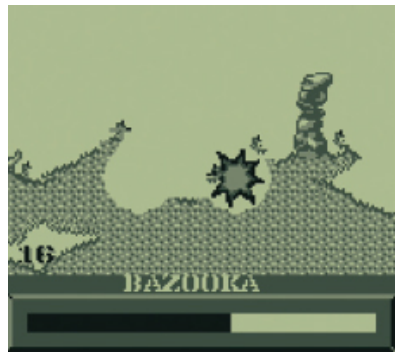
ORIGINALLY RELEASED IN arcades in 1994, this Neo Geo fighting game was so improved over World Heroes 2 that it was essentially considered the third in the series. The Game Boy port was part of Takara's series of 'chibi' remakes of arcade fighting games (known as its Nettou series in Japan), meaning it looks completely different to the visually realistic coin-op original but plays surprisingly faithfully. All 17 famous historical fighters from the arcade version are present and accounted for – including newcomers Jack (based on Jack the Ripper) and Ryofu (a Chinese warlord from the Three Kingdoms era), and all of their moves are present too. As a result, it's considered a solid Game Boy fighter, along with Takara's other Nettou games. ■

FACT

Like Takara's other Nettou games, World Heroes 2 Jet supports two controllers on the Super Game Boy, allowing you to play two-player matches with only one cartridge.

WORMS

Year Publisher Developer 1995 Ocean Team17



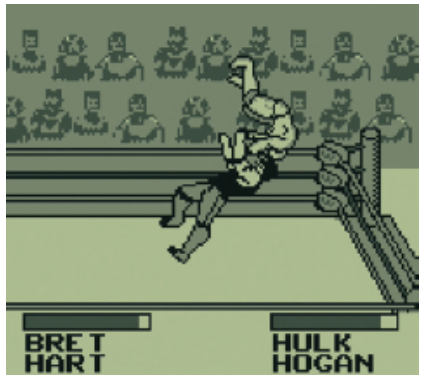
THIS TURN-BASED INVERTEBRATE action game was originally released on the Amiga before being ported to almost every system known to humankind at the time. The Game Boy version retains most of the basics: playing as a team of four armed worms, you have to navigate a procedurally generated landscape and kill the other teams inhabiting it, ultimately aiming to be the last team standing. Well, sort of flopping, or whatever it is worms do. You've got a limited time to carry out each turn, and are armed with a variety of weapons, from bazookas, grenades and shotguns to sillier gizmos like an exploding sheep which can be sent hopping off then detonated at will. You can customise the names of your four worms, giving the game a personal touch. ■

FACT

The Game Boy version's default team is called 'Oh No' and has worms called Builder, Climber, Blocker and Digger. This is a nod to Lemmings, the game Worms was often compared to.

WWF KING OF THE RING

Year Publisher Developer 1993 LJN Eastridge Technology



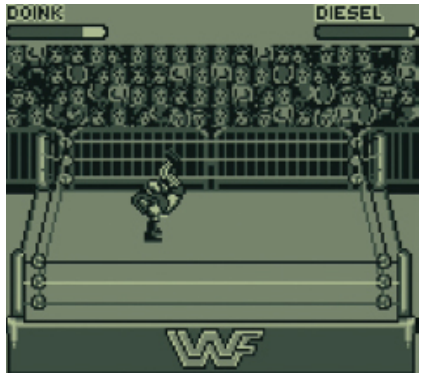
THE GAME BOY got no fewer than five WWF wrestling games, of which King of the Ring was the third. There are eight playable superstars in the game – Bret 'The Hitman' Hart, Hulk Hogan, Macho Man Randy Savage, Mr Perfect, Shawn Michaels, Yokozuna, 'The Narcissist' Lex Luger and Razor Ramon – as well as 'You', a generic wrestler you can rename and attribute speed, strength and stamina stats to. As well as the option to play one-on-one or tag team matches there's also the opportunity to play a Tournament mode in which you defeat the other eight wrestlers to try and win the WWF Championship. Of course, there's also the titular King of the Ring, which is really just an eight-man knockout bracket. ■

FACT

It was at the 1996 King of the Ring tournament where Stone Cold Steve Austin first uttered the immortal catchphrase 'Austin 3:16 says I just whupped your ass'.

WWF RAW

Year Publisher Developer 1994 LJN Realtime Associates



IN THE FIRST half of the ‘90s Acclaim released three 16-bit WWF games under its LJN label, the third of which was WWF Raw. This Game Boy port does its best to replicate the 16-bit versions’ (admittedly basic) gameplay, but has a reduced roster of eight: Bret Hart, Diesel, Doink the Clown, Lex Luger, The Undertaker, Razor Ramon, Shawn Michaels and Yokozuna make the cut, but the 1-2-3 Kid, Bam Bam Bigelow, Luna Vachon and Owen Hart don’t. Players can choose a one-on-one, tag team or four-on-four Survivor Series match, but only two wrestlers can be displayed at once. As such, the Game Boy version is missing the Royal Rumble and Bedlam (tornado tag) matches from the SNES, Mega Drive and 32X versions. ■

FACT

The WWE claims *Raw* is the longest-running weekly episodic show in the US, but *The Simpsons* started four years earlier, while *Meet the Press* has been going since 1947.

WWF SUPERSTARS

Year Publisher Developer 1991 LJN Rare

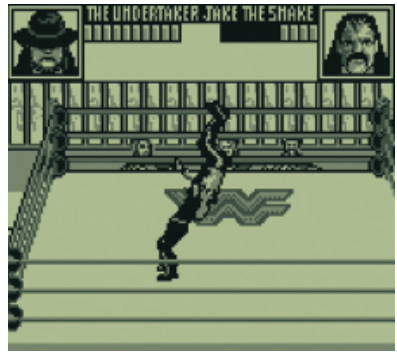
THE FIRST WWF game released on the Game Boy is the most limited but arguably has the most solid gameplay, which is perhaps unsurprising given the developer. There are only five wrestlers to choose from – Hulk Hogan, the Ultimate Warrior, Macho King Randy Savage, Mr Perfect and the Million Dollar Man Ted DiBiase – and each can perform a relatively decent number of moves given the era. By hitting Select once per match you can also lift your opponent and hurl them out of the ring. One nice touch is the trash talking feature, in which the two wrestlers trade specific insults before each fight. Pit Mr Perfect against the Million Dollar Man, for example, and he'll declare: 'Your chances of beating me aren't worth two cents!' ■

FACT

The trash talk isn't all gold. When Randy Savage fights Mr Perfect, the best he can come up with is: 'Mr Perfect? Oh yeah, Mr Imperfect is more like it!' Um, roasted.

WWF SUPERSTARS 2

Year 1992
Publisher LJN
Developer Sculptured Software



DESPITE THE TITLE, this isn't really related to the first WWF Superstars because Rare had nothing to do with it. Instead, it's more of a Game Boy mash-up of the 16-bit game WWF WrestleMania Challenge and the 8-bit game Steel Cage Challenge, featuring the gameplay of the former and the steel cage match of the latter. There are only six wrestlers to choose from: Hulk Hogan, Macho Man Randy Savage, The Undertaker, Sid Justice, Jake 'The Snake' Roberts and The Mountie, and there are straightforward one-on-one, cage, tag team and Tournament options, the latter once again letting players take on all the other wrestlers one at a time in an attempt to win the WWF World Heavyweight Championship. ■

FACT

If you're wondering why Randy Savage is the Macho Man in some games and the Macho King in others, he became Macho King in 1989 when he was a bad guy, ditching it in 1991 when he turned good again.

WWF WAR ZONE

Year	*Publisher*	*Developer*
1998	Acclaim	Probe Entertainment

THE LAST WWF game to be released on the Game Boy, WWF War Zone is technically based on Acclaim's PS1 and Nintendo 64 game of the same name, but in reality plays nothing like them (though this does at least mean it doesn't have their unwieldy Mortal Kombat-style button commands for each move). With 13 wrestlers it's the biggest roster of any Game Boy grappler, and there's very little crossover with previous games: only The Undertaker and Shawn Michaels were previously in a Game Boy game, while newcomers include Stone Cold Steve Austin, Kane, Goldust, Triple H, Ahmed Johnson, Faarooq, Owen Hart, the British Bulldog, Rocky Maivia, Mankind and Ken Shamrock. The main mode, WWF Challenge, has you climbing the ranks to fight for the title. ■

FACT

Every wrestler has a finishing move in the game, and they're all based on their real-life finishers except for Owen Hart's. His sharpshooter has been replaced with a spinning heel kick.

XENON 2: MEGABLAST

Year 1992
Publisher Mindscape
Developer Teeny Weeny Games

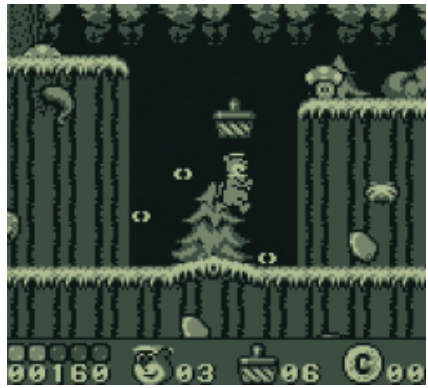
THIS SHOOT ‘EM up was best known on other formats for its fantastic music by electronic musician Bomb the Bass. The Game Boy port puts forward its own reasonable rendition of the game’s title theme, and that effort is reflected in the gameplay too, which is about as solid a port as you could expect on the hardware. Players have to travel through time and destroy the five time bombs which have been planted by the evil Xenites. The action slowly scrolls upwards, but Xenon 2 is unique in that it’s possible to fly down towards the bottom of the screen and ‘push’ it back down, changing the scrolling direction for a few seconds to give you more space during tight spots. ■

FACT

The game features one of the coolest but most limited shop items in a shoot ‘em up, the Super Nashwan. It gives you a ridiculous amount of firepower, but only lasts 10 seconds.

YOGI BEAR’S GOLD RUSH

Year 1994
Publisher GameTek / Empire Interactive
Developer Twilight



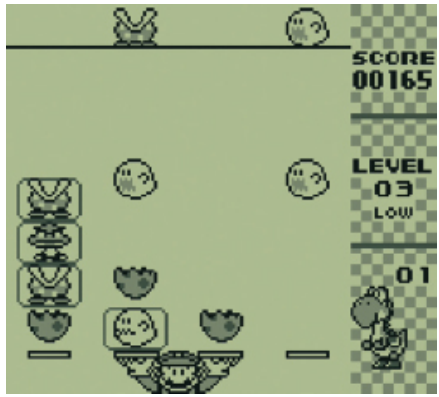
YOGI BEAR HAS a bit of a problem. Other than his addiction to picnic basket theft, I mean. A ghost called Jake has stolen funds from Jellystone National Park, and without it the park will no longer be able to operate (which means no more visitors, and therefore no more picnic baskets). Yogi's journey to retrieve the funds takes in six locations: Jellystone itself, the clouds, a pirate ship, a construction site, a mine shaft and the Old West. The game itself is a straightforward, harmless platformer that ticks all the Mario tropes – jump on the enemies' heads to kill them, and so on – though coins have been replaced with (you guessed it) picnic baskets. ■

FACT

There are twelve hidden gold bars in the game and you need to find them all for the good ending. If you don't, Jellystone isn't saved from closure, which feels harsh.

YOSHI

Year 1992 *Publisher* Nintendo *Developer* Game Freak



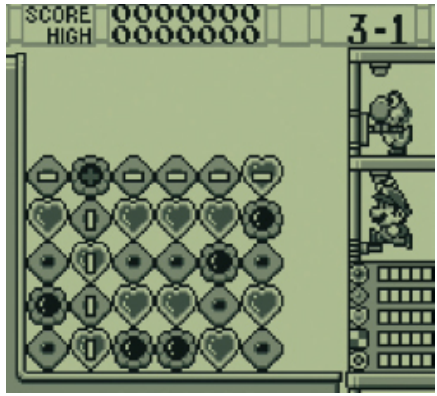
THE FIRST OF two Game Boy puzzle games starring everyone's favourite '90s dinosaur (sorry Denver), Yoshi was known in Europe as Mario & Yoshi, presumably because it was decided the poor lad didn't have enough clout in that region. The playing area consists of four columns, with various Mario enemies dropping down. Playing as Mario, you can swap two adjacent columns around, in an attempt to line up the falling enemies. If one enemy lands on another of the same type, both will disappear. However, the most points are to be had with egg shells: place a bottom shell and a top shell together (with any enemies in between them) and it'll close over, hatching a Yoshi and netting big points. ■

FACT

Hidden in the game's code is an unused fifth enemy, a Bullet Bill. Presumably it was assumed the game would be too hard with five pieces, so it was dropped.

YOSHI'S COOKIE

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Nintendo Tose



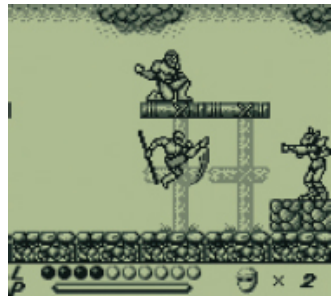
NOT CONTENT WITH eating every enemy he comes across, Yoshi is also something of a culinary expert when it comes to the art of cookie making. Yoshi's Cookie fills the screen with cookies of different shapes, and the aim is to slide the rows and columns around – a bit like a 2D Rubik's cube – until a full row or column of one shape is made, at which point it's cleared from the grid. If you can manage to clear all the cookies from the screen, you'll move onto the next stage. There's also a Versus mode, which can be played against another player with the Link Cable or against a CPU opponent: here you have to clear as much as possible to fill your points meter first. ■

FACT

Before it got a Mario makeover, Yoshi's Cookie was originally called Hermetica. A hidden debug menu (which can be unlocked with a Game Genie) still refers to it by that name.

ZEN: INTERGALACTIC NINJA

Year Publisher Developer 1993 Konami Konami



BASED ON THE 1987 comic book character, Zen the Intergalactic Ninja follows the titular alien martial artist as he takes on Lord Contaminous, an environmental menace who wants to destroy Earth by turning it into a toxic waste dump. This Game Boy platformer is completely different (and some would say superior) to the NES game of the same name, and lets players choose the order in which to take on its four main stages: the Rancid County Dump, the Slixxon Oil Tanker, the Acid Forest and Factory Inc, and the Pollution Dam. Zen is naturally armed with a repertoire of ninja attacks, but he's a lover first and a fighter second: bonus stages have him rescuing birds from an oil spill and shooting trash out of the sky. ■

FACT

Zen was created by writer Stephen Stern in 1970, when he was inspired by the first Earth Day. He couldn't find an artist for his story, though, so it remained unused for a decade and a half.

ZOOL: NINJA OF THE NTH DIMENSION

Year	1993
Publisher	Gremlin Graphics / GameTek
Developer	Gremlin Graphics

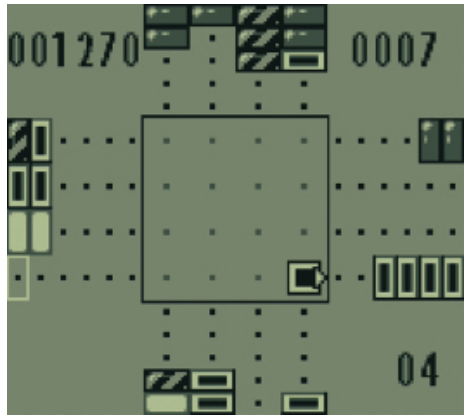
ONE DAY, WHILE out in his spaceship, Zool (who definitely isn't supposed to be an ant) finds himself caught in a vortex, then crash-lands in a mysterious world made of candy. It turns out Zool's nemesis Krool has taken over this world and others, so Zool has to defeat his forces to get back home. Originally released on the Amiga, Zool is a fast-paced platformer where players don't just have to reach the end of the stage, but have to collect enough pickups along the way in order to trigger the exit. The Game Boy version is a faithful enough rendition but it only has four worlds – Sweet World, Music World, Fruit World and Toy World – meaning the tool, desert island and fairground worlds have been dropped. ■

FACT

Creator George Allen was originally planning on calling the game Pootz, so if you think Zool is a silly name you should probably count yourself lucky it wasn't worse.

ZOOP

Year	1995
Publisher	Viacom New Media
Developer	Hookstone



THIS SIMPLE BUT compelling puzzle game was released on nine different formats, including Nintendo's trusty handheld. You control a cursor which can move around a little 4x4 grid in the middle of the screen. Shapes start slowly making their way towards the grid, and you have to get rid of them by shooting at them. If the shape you hit is the same as your cursor, it'll disappear: if not, they'll swap places and your cursor will now look like that shape. I say shape, but in reality the Game Boy version – unlike the others – only has rectangles with different patterns on them: a shame, because of all nine versions, the non-colour one would have benefited most from different shapes. ■

FACT

One thing the Game Boy version of Zoop does boast that none of the others have is a two-player mode using the Link Cable, so there's that at least.

GAME BOY COLOR GAMES

As popular as the Game Boy was, there was one obvious area where it could be improved. That improvement was eventually made nine years after the original hardware was launched, as Nintendo released the Game Boy Color in 1998. Sporting a snazzy new colour LCD screen and a name that annoyed Europeans (because Nintendo insisted on not adding the 'U' to 'Color' in that region), the Game Boy Color marked the first major step-up for the hardware, not only in the most obvious sense but also under the hood.

The Game Boy Color – or GBC if you're not trying to fill page space – boasted a processor with a clock speed that was twice that of the original Game Boy, and featured three times as much memory, resulting in a handheld that was capable of producing games that looked better and ran smoother than anything on the standard device. The key word there is 'capable', however, as some developers and publishers chose not to make the most of the GBC's abilities for one big reason. The original Game Boy still had an enormous user base, so companies were wary of releasing games for a new system, meaning fewer potential sales. Nintendo's solution was to give them two different types of cartridge to work with.

If you look at a GBC cartridge, it will either be black or (more likely) clear. The black cartridges obviously work on the GBC and feature games in full colour, but they also work on a standard Game Boy, where they obviously lose the colour but are otherwise usually the exact same experience. The clear cartridges, on the other hand, make use of the GBC's full processing power and improved memory, and therefore work only on the GBC: put them in a Game Boy and you'll get an error message telling you it's incompatible. While this section of the book covers both types of cartridge, I appreciate that not everyone has a Game Boy Color and may want to know which of these games work on their trusty standard Game Boy. As such, next to the regional information for each game in this section is a

little GB logo, which will tell you whether each game is compatible with the Game Boy. I'm nice like that.

The Game Boy Color's lifespan was much shorter than that of the Game Boy, but its library certainly burned a lot brighter. Despite only spanning from 1998 to 2003 (when all Game Boy and GBC models were discontinued), the GBC library in the west consists of around 560 games, almost as many as that of the original Game Boy. Some of these are simply colourised ports of existing Game Boy titles – which, as you can imagine, are the entries here that were the hardest to write, because how do you make 'it's the same but in colour' sound exciting for the 50th time? – while others took the 'licensed IP tie-in' ball and ran up a mountain with it. Only on the GBC could you find a Double Dragon style beat 'em up starring WWF wrestlers, a pair of (underrated) platformers based on the Sabrina the Teenage Witch animated series and a bizarre mini-game compilation based on pop band NSYNC. For some reason, the GBC was also the moment when Germany woke up to the potential of video games, which is why you'll find far more games based on German comics and TV shows here than you ever have in any of my previous encyclopedias. Viel Spaß!

007: THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH

Year Publisher Developer 2001 Electronic Arts 2n

Productions

THE 19TH BOND movie was released in cinemas in late 1999, with N64 and PlayStation games in late 2000. This Game Boy Color take didn't arrive until late 2001, but at least it follows the plot of the film for those who saw it two years earlier and didn't remember it much. Playing as Pierce Brosnan's Bond, you have to take on eight missions set across Spain, London, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkey as you try to track down a terrorist called Renard. Each stage has a number of tasks that have to be completed, and Bond is also armed with a range of weapons, from night vision glasses to a laser-firing watch he can use to cut locks. ■

FACT

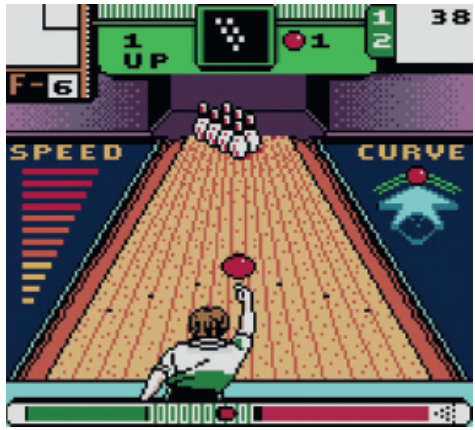
The game was going to support the Transfer Pak: players could move their progress over to the N64 game and power up their multiplayer character, but the idea was ditched.

10 PIN BOWLING

Year 1999

Publisher Majesco

Developer Morning Star Multimedia



ACCORDING TO THE 10-Pin Bowling manual, 'you now own your very own bowling alley, in the palm of your hand'. The game isn't quite as realistic as that sounds, but it does its best to offer a serious take on the sport. After positioning your bowler on the lane you hold A to start your approach, during which time you have to set the speed and spin. Then you have to release A at just the right time to throw the ball accurately. 10-Pin Bowling is also one of only 16 Game Boy Color games released in the west to have a rumble feature built into the cartridge. You have to insert a AAA battery into the actual cart to make it work. ■

FACT

Although 10-Pin Bowling isn't compatible with the original Game Boy, it was originally planned to be a Game Boy title. A prototype was leaked which runs on Game Boy hardware.

102 DALMATIANS: PUPPIES TO THE RESCUE

Year 2000
Publisher Activision
Developer Crystal Dynamics

WHILE TECHNICALLY BASED on the live action movie *102 Dalmatians*, this platformer has an art style more like the animated original and features a completely different storyline. Cruella de Vil is annoyed that her toy business is failing because kids are spending all their money on their pets, so she turns her toys evil and programs them to kidnap every Dalmatian in England. Playing as one of two dalmatian puppies, Domino or Oddball (they play identically), you have to collect the master key in each of the game's 17 stages then use it to unlock all the cages to progress. Cruella's robot toys are stalking each stage and looking to harm your puppy, but you can bark at them to stun them. ■

FACT

The movie got bad reviews but was at least nominated for an Academy Award for Best Costume Design, which is expected when you've got Cruella de Vil in there.

1942

Year 2000 *Publisher* Capcom *Developer* Digital Eclipse

CAPCOM'S VERTICALLY SCROLLING shoot 'em up had already been ported to a number of systems by the time it came to the Game Boy Color, not least a 1985 NES version that this appears to be partly based on. Set during World War II, you fly a US plane (based on the Lockheed P-38 Lightning) and have to shoot down countless Japanese planes, a bold premise considering the game was made by a Japanese developer. The Game Boy version has the same irritating 'music' as the NES one – with the arcade version's militarystyle whistle-blowing replaced by a single beep – and the action is zoomed in a little, but it runs a lot smoother than the NES version did. ■

FACT

According to Capcom designer Yoshiki Okamoto, 1942 features a US plane because it was one of the first titles Capcom designed while taking the western market into account.

3D POCKET POOL

Year 2001
Publisher Virgin Interactive
Developer Aardvark Software

DON'T LOOK UP 'pocket pool' online, because it has a rude alternate meaning that the developers at British studio Aardvark Software probably weren't aware of. A spiritual successor of sorts to Aardvark's 1990 Amiga game 3D Pool, the game lets you choose between different rule sets, including UK pub rules (yellow and red balls) and a few different US set-ups (numbered solids and stripes). As the title suggests, the main gimmick here is the ability to view the table in 3D, with the player able to pan and rotate the camera when they're not taking a shot. There are eight characters to choose from, each with their own backstory: one wants to use the prize money to fund a sitcom in which he's adopted by an LA family.

FACT

At one point the game was pitched to Nintendo as Wario Pool, and an intro in which Wario is challenged by some literal sharks was created. Nintendo wasn't interested, though.

3D ULTRA PINBALL: THRILLRIDE

Year 2000
Publisher Sierra On-Line
Developer Left Field Productions

USING THE SAME game engine as Left Field's earlier Little Mermaid themed GBC pinball title, 3D Ultra Pinball: Thrillride is a pinball table with an amusement park theme: specifically, one based on the Hersheypark theme park in Pennsylvania. Its logo is on the title screen, the players are represented by Hershey chocolate bar characters and the unlockable mini-game areas are based on rides from the park such as the Great Bear (a rollercoaster) and the Sidewinder (um, another rollercoaster). Despite the title there isn't really anything 3D about it: the game is played from a topdown viewpoint. It's also one of the handful of Game Boy Color cartridges with rumble support, meaning you can feel every flipper hit and inevitable missed ball. ■

FACT

If things are a bit rollercoaster heavy for you, one of the other rides in the game is the Kissing Tower, an observation tower named after Hershey Kisses chocolates.

720°

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Midway Digital Eclipse

ORIGINALLY RELEASED IN arcades by Atari in 1986, 720° is a skateboarding game that's part open world, part eventbased. Starting in a neighbourhood area, you have to skate around doing tricks until you've earned enough money to enter one of the competitions dotted around: Ramp, Downhill, Jump and Slalom. By doing well in each of these contests, you'll earn prize money which gives you a good start as you try to earn enough for entry to the next one. You'll need it too: if you spend too long in the neighbourhood section the game will declare 'skate or die' and you'll have to enter a competition quickly before you're attacked by a swarm of bees. And judging by the warning, it sounds a bit My Girl. ■

FACT

The name is based on what was the ultimate skateboarding trick at the time, a 720° (which means turning two full circles in the air). Tony Hawk then performed a 900° in 1999.

ACTION MAN: SEARCH FOR BASE X

Year Publisher Developer 2001 THQ Natsume

ACTION MAN WAS originally launched in the UK in the 1960s as the British version of G.I. Joe, but when Hasbro decided to revive the brand as the millennium approached the US got it too. Search for Base X is a run and gun game based on the 2000 animated TV series, and sees our hero looking for the evil Dr X's base to stop him launching a weapon of mass destruction. The main gimmick here is based on the Action Man dolls: players can choose which outfit to wear when taking on each stage. While it's possible to beat each stage with any outfit the first time around, when you try again for 100% completion you have to wear certain outfits to pass some obstacles. ■

FACT

A 1995 Action Man cartoon series was only allowed to be released on VHS in the UK due to TV broadcast rules: a toy could be made from a cartoon, but a cartoon couldn't be made from a toy.

THE ADVENTURES OF THE SMURFS

Year Publisher Developer 2001 Infogrames Infogrames

IT'S SOMEWHAT IRONIC (or maybe deliberate) that the Smurfs' only Game Boy Color exclusive is one in which some of them lose their trademark blue hue. Some of the Smurfs have turned orange thanks to a botched experiment by an apprentice Smurf, so it's up to Handy Smurf to build a machine to turn them back to their cobalt complexion. The game takes place over 16 stages, played from a mix of overhead and side-on perspectives, and see Handy Smurf crossing a river on a boat, exploring swampland, flying over the Smurf Village on a biplane, exploring a mine, riding a wooden cart over broken bridges, climbing a snowy mountain and passing through a lava-filled cave among other things. ■

FACT

The *Smurf Apprentice* was the seventh book in the Smurfs series, in which the apprentice turns himself into a green monster. In the cartoon version of the story, Clumsy Smurf is the apprentice.

AIRFORCE DELTA

Year 2000
Publisher Konami
Developer Climax

TECHNICALLY BASED ON the Dreamcast game of the same name but obviously completely different given the gulf in processing power, AirForce Delta is a dogfighting game in which you've been contracted by a mercenary group to fight the People's Federation, a renegade army looking to conquer the continent. Players use the in-game radar to find enemy targets then either attempt to aim their guns to take them out or – if they're proving tricky – use one of their limited supply of 'fire and forget' missiles. The game lets players choose from eight real-life planes, including the F-18 Hornet, the A-10 Thunderbolt and the F-22 Raptor. the GBC version includes one plane not in the Dreamcast game: the Lockheed Martin X-33 Venture Star, known here as the XF-33. ■

FACT

The X-33 was a 'spaceplane' prototyped by Lockeed Martin in the 90s. It was eventually scrapped in 2001 after numerous failed tests, though it did look very cool.

ALADDIN

Year 2000
Publisher Ubisoft
Developer Crawfish Interactive

A NUMBER OF games in this section are Game Boy titles that have been colourised and re-released on the Game Boy Color with few changes made. While Aladdin may initially appear to be an example of this, it's actually not. Whereas the Game Boy version was developed by NMS, this port was handled by a different studio and is essentially another take on the Mega Drive original, with completely redrawn backgrounds. One other notable difference is that the Game Boy Color version actually uses the right music tracks from the Mega Drive one, whereas the Game Boy one alternated between two different songs, leading to an awkward conclusion where you'd fight Jafar as 'A Whole New World' gently plays. ■

FACT

Both the GB and GBC versions credit Mark Crane as the programmer, and while they look and sound different they play similarly at a core level.

ALFRED'S ADVENTURE

Year 2000 *Publisher* Sales Curve Interactive *Developer*

Mobius Entertainment

MUCH LIKE ALADDIN, this is another game that appears at first glance to be a straight recolouring (this time of Game Boy title Alfred Chicken) but is more of a remake instead. The plot remains the same – Alfred has to rescue his girlfriend Floella, as well as Billy Egg and his brothers, from the evil Mekka-Chickens – and for the most part the gameplay is near-identical too. However, as well as the obvious addition of colour (and an improved frame rate), each of the game's levels has also been tweaked slightly to make things a little easier for the player. Other features from the Game Boy version have been dropped, including many hidden rooms and the ability to collect jam and shoot bombs at enemies. ■

FACT

In 2016, Piko Interactive said it had obtained an unreleased Mega Drive version of Alfred Chicken and wanted to release it. However, a rights conflict stopped this from happening.

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

Year 2000
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Digital Eclipse

MOST FILM TIEINS tend to release roughly around the same time as the movie. While Alice in Wonderland arrived a mere 49 years later than the film, it was only a few months after its DVD debut. The game follows the plot of the movie fairly closely and has Alice chasing the White Rabbit, falling down the enormous hole, entering Wonderland and exploring it. Gimmick set-pieces are naturally plentiful, including drinking from bottles to make Alice grow and shrink, chasing the dormouse around the Mad Hatter's garden to get a key it's carrying, and playing croquet against the Queen of Hearts. One stage even lets you play as Bill, the Cockney lizard with the ladder, who appears briefly in the movie. ■

FACT

A TV ad for the game showed a bunch of pink Game Boy Colors marching in line like the playing cards do in the movie.

ALIENS: THANATOS ENCOUNTER

Year 2001
Publisher THQ
Developer Crawfish Interactive

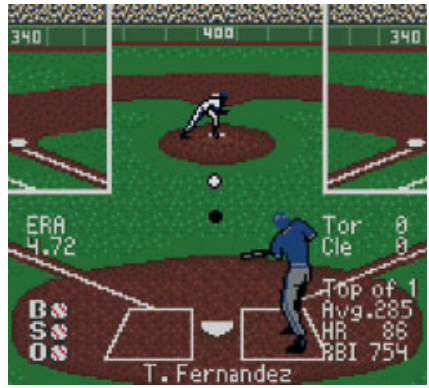
THIS TOP-DOWN ACTION game based on the *Alien* movies takes place on *Thanatos*, a large freighter spaceship. The *Thanatos* recently sent out a distress signal, so a group of nearby marines dock and board it to see what's going on (though you can probably guess). There are five marines to choose from, each with different Speed and Stamina stats, and if one 'dies' you have the chance to resurrect them by picking a different marine and trying to rescue them from an Alien-infested area before a timer runs out. When all five marines are dead it's Game Over. Numerous iconic Aliens elements are present, including the Queen Alien, the Pulse Rifle, the Power Loader and the Motion Tracker. ■

FACT

The name Thanatos comes from Greek mythology and is the personification of death. Just in case you thought the game was going to be a romantic comedy.

ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2000

Year 2000
Publisher Acclaim Sports
Developer Realtime Associates



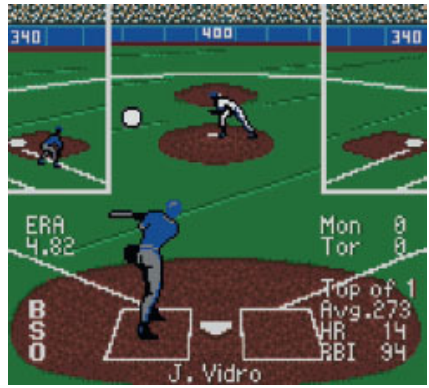
SOME BASEBALLLOVING VIDEO game fans may have had a strong feeling of deja vu when they first started All-Star Baseball 2000. Despite the five-year gap, it's basically an updated version of the Game Boy title Frank Thomas' Big Hurt Baseball, right down to the identical title music and the same main menu. There are some differences, the addition of colour aside: whereas Big Hurt Baseball only had the MLBPA licence for real player names, All-Star Baseball adds the MLB licence too, meaning team names and logos are legitimate too. Naturally, all the rosters and stats have been updated so they aren't half a decade old, but otherwise fans of the Game Boy title may have felt a little like they'd double-dipped with this one. ■

FACT

Frank Thomas was still playing for the Chicago White Sox in 2000. Must have been awkward for 'his' game to come out again, with him still in it but no longer in the title.

ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2001

Year 2000
Publisher Acclaim Sports
Developer KnowWonder



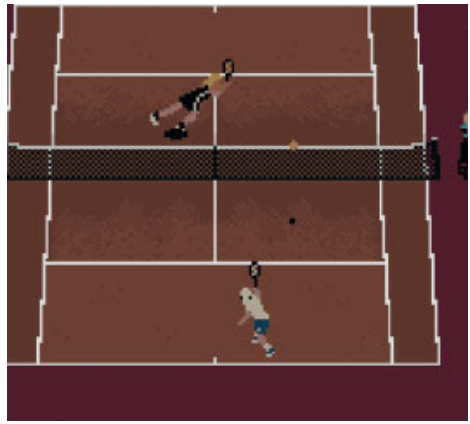
NOT CONTENT WITH repurposing Frank Thomas' Big Hurt Baseball the year before, Acclaim decided to make All- Star Baseball 2001 a repurposed version of All-Star Baseball 2000. Once again the title screen music is identical, though at least the main menu is laid out slightly differently. Stats have been updated for the new season, and there's a single new team called the Cooperstown Hall of Fame Legends, featuring old players such as Yogi Berra, Stan Musial, Reggie Jackson and Willie Stargell. That aside, though, when it actually gets to the action on the field it's practically identical, meaning if you don't have either and fancy trying one out, it's probably wise to just get whichever one you find for the lowest price. ■

FACT

IGN was so annoyed that 2001 was so similar to 2000 that it republished its previous review. If I'd known that was allowed, this book would have been written quicker.

ALL-STAR TENNIS 2000

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Ubisoft Smart Dog



UBISOFT HAD PREVIOUSLY released All Star Tennis ‘99 on the PlayStation and N64, but by the time it came to the Game Boy enough time had passed to make a name change necessary. There are twelve real-life tennis pros to choose from, though it’s fair to say that with the exception of Jana Novotná and Mark Philippoussis most of them weren’t troubling the top of the ATP or WTA rankings at the time. As well as one-off games you can also play an Arcade mode (where you face off against a series of opponents in succession) and a mode called Bomb Tennis, where every time the ball bounces off the ground it leaves a bomb behind it. ■

FACT

Novotná was known for one of the most crushing losses in tennis when she threw away a good lead in the Wimbledon final in 1993. She persevered and came back to win it in 1998.

ALONE IN THE DARK: THE NEW NIGHTMARE

Year 2001
Publisher Infogrames
Developer Pocket Studios

A HANDHELD TAKE on Infogrames' PS1, PS2 and Dreamcast survival horror, The New Nightmare imitates its more powerful console brethren by placing a 3D character on top of pre-rendered 2D backgrounds to make something that looked seriously impressive for the Game Boy Color. Playing as Edward Carnby (the second playable character was ditched for this port), you have to explore a large house in Shadow Island as you investigate the death of your friend Charles Fiske. Monster encounters switch the action to a separate isometric, scrolling viewpoint to make it easier to attack enemies. It may not have gone down as one of the better games on the GBC, but it certainly stands as one of the most technically ambitious 'impossible' ports. ■

FACT

The *Alone in the Dark* movie released in 2005 was partly based on The New Nightmare. Helmed by the notoriously anti-Midas director Uwe Boll, it was a complete flop.

ANIMORPHS

Year 2000
Publisher Ubisoft
Developer Runny-Fun

IF YOU WERE a child of the late ‘90s you may have been familiar with Animorphs, a series of young adult books (and later a TV show) about five humans and an alien who can transform into any animal they touch. Good luck turning into a jellyfish then, mate. As in the books and show, the game has you taking on a race of alien slugs called the Yeeks. The game was clearly influenced by Pokémon, as Yeek encounters take the form of turn-based battles where you choose an animal to fight as (much like choosing which Pokémon to call on). Your morphs can also be used to bypass certain sections in the game’s overworld, much like the HMs in Pokémon. ■

FACT

There’s a secret fifth mission. Enter the password Dqrkhpy!Yy1yx3y! to play a mission where you control Ax and have to rescue the rest of the characters before fighting Visser 3.

ANTZ

Year Publisher Developer

1999 Infogrames CLCE & Planet

BASED ON THE animated ant movie that wasn't *A Bug's Life*, Antz has you playing as Z (voiced by Woody Allen in the film) as he tries to rescue Princess Bala from a wedding she doesn't want, then heads off in search of the legendary insect paradise Insectopia. The game is a straightforward action platformer consisting of 19 stages, initially taking place in Z's colony but eventually expanding to take in other locations. Z can jump on enemies' heads to kill them, but when that isn't practical he can also – rather brutally – throw pickaxes at them. While there's a password system, you only get a password if you can find the three hidden keys on a stage. ■

FACT

Pixar's John Lasseter and Steve Jobs accused DreamWorks founder Jeffery Katzenberg (who used to be a Disney chairman) of stealing their idea for *A Bug's Life*.

ANTZ RACING

Year 2001
Publisher Acclaim / EA
Developer RFX Interactive

WHAT IF YOU were a fan of *Antz* but you didn't like platform games? What if you wanted to see an anthropomorphic ant voiced by the man who wrote *Manhattan* taking part in a race instead? Enter Antz Racing, an isometric racing game where you can choose between six characters and their own makeshift vehicles: Z drives a spinach leaf, Bala drives a tin can with a hole cut in it, and so on. The game is based around the seasons, with each featuring two circuits set in a certain location: summer at the anthill, autumn in a forest park, winter on a frozen pond and spring in the city. Powerups can be collected to help you, including speed boosts, invincibility and a missile. ■

FACT

EA was originally supposed to publish the game in the US until it announced that it was no longer publishing Light & Shadow Production's titles. Acclaim took over US publishing.

ANTZ WORLD SPORTS

Year 2001
Publisher Light and Shadow Production
Developer M4 Limited

IF PLATFORMING AND racing aren't your bag, then perhaps your fussy tastes will be satiated with an event-based sports game instead? Antz World Sportz lets you choose Z, Princess Bala, Weaver or General Mandible and take on eight different bug-themed sports: the 100mm Sprint, the Javelin (with a cotton swab), 400mm Street Skating, Termite Rodeo, Tug of War, Aphid Jump, Shot Put (with a pebble), and the 4x400mm Relay (where you just pass the baton to clones of yourself). Button-bashing is the order of the day here but not too much, oddly: if you press the buttons too quickly your speed bar will drop so the game has a sort of 'sweet spot' where you have to find the right pace. ■

FACT

Antz was the first and only fully CGI movie to be given a PG rating in the 20th century, because of some mild swearing (which was removed when it was shown on TV).

ARCADE HITS: JOUST / DEFENDER

Year 1999
Publisher Midway
Developer Digital Eclipse

SIMILAR TO THE Arcade Classic titles released by Nintendo on the original Game Boy, Arcade Hits offers handheld versions of a pair of coin-op favourites (albeit this time ported over by the retro masters at Digital Eclipse). If you're not familiar with them, Joust has players riding around on a flying ostrich, trying to knock opponents off their steeds. Defender, meanwhile, is a 'wraparound' side-scrolling shoot 'em up where you have to defeat all the aliens in each stage while protecting the humans on the ground. Each game has a series of options: Joust, for example, lets you select the base difficulty and choose how many lives you start with. ■

FACT

Joust had a generally forgotten sequel called Survival of the Fittest, which switched to a vertical stage layout and added more complexity, like being able to turn your ostrich into a flying horse.

ARCADE HITS: MOON PATROL / SPY HUNTER

Year 1999
Publisher Midway
Developer Digital Eclipse

ANOTHER DOUBLE-BILL OF arcade classics, again handled by Digital Eclipse. Moon Patrol was originally developed by Irem and is a side-scrolling, auto-scroll action game where you control a moon buggy as it races against the surface of the planet white taking out enemies in front of you, shooting UFOs above you and jumping over craters. Then there's Spy Hunter, a Midwaydeveloped Bond knock-off where you race an armed sports car along a series of roads, shooting down enemy cars and occasionally turning into a speedboat. The apparent theme is that both games contain vehicles but they couldn't really be more different, with Moon Patrol offering more laid-back action and Spy Hunter being a real high speed test of reaction times. ■

FACT

Spy Hunter was developed as a James Bond game but the rights couldn't be acquired so the planned Bond music was replaced by a rendition of Henry Mancini's iconic theme from TV show *Peter Gunn*.

ARMADA F/X RACERS

Year 2000
Publisher Metro3D
Developer Metro3D

ALTHOUGH IT'S SET in the same universe as Dreamcast shooter RPG Armada, this is an entirely different kettle of futuristic fish. Whereas its predecessor was about flying round the galaxy shooting enemies, F/X Racers is instead a top-down racing game in which the best racers from the Armada galaxy are competing to be the best. There are a few gimmicks: if you hit top speed for long enough you'll enter 'Power' mode, where you gain a further speed boost and don't take damage if you hit something. Finish first or second in a race and a bonus race against a large alien will appear. Both of you then have to continually ram the alien until it's destroyed, earning you an extra credit. ■

FACT

Once you complete the game you unlock a Survival mode where you skip the normal races and just take on the alien boss races in order.

ARMORINES: PROJECT S.W.A.R.M.

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Acclaim Neon Software

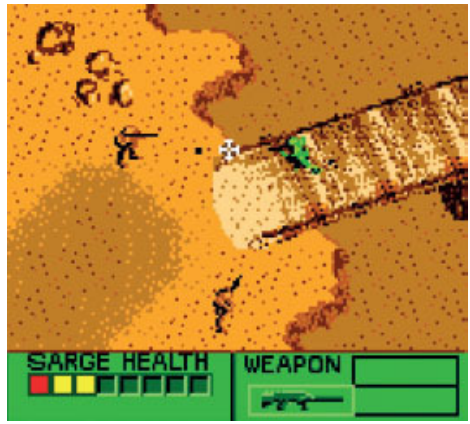
THE N64 VERSION of Armorines was a bugkilling FPS using the Turok 2 engine, but obviously the Game Boy Colour could never handle that so instead developer Neon created this top-down shooter in which you play as Sergeant Snider, a top Armorine (a high tech military 'troubleshooter') who's sent to an outpost on Venus which stopped sending signals two weeks ago. The aim is to blast the umpteen killer alien insects you find when you get there, while also trying to access the outpost's records to figure out what's going on. The adventure eventually takes you onto the aliens' mothership and their home planet, so if you were worried there wouldn't be enough of them to kill, that fear was clearly unfounded.

FACT

The Armorines first appeared in an issue of the *X-O Manowar* comic and would get their own 12-issue run in 1994–95.

ARMY MEN

Year 2000
Publisher The 3DO Company
Developer Digital Eclipse



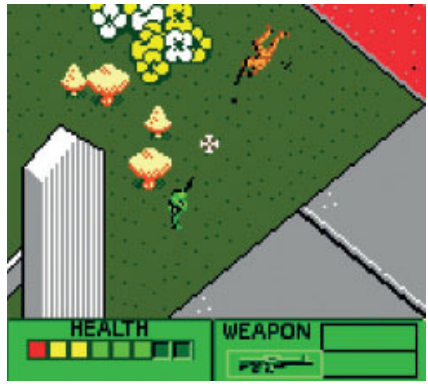
THE ARMY MEN series churned out a frankly ridiculous 19 games in four years, but it had to start somewhere. That somewhere was the original Army Men, a top-down tactical action game on the PC. A couple of years later, when you couldn't move for Army Men games, the original was ported to the Game Boy. The plot is simple: the Tan army has started to invade, so it's up to Sarge – a veteran of the Green army – to neutralise their advances over the course of a series of missions. There are two main campaigns, Desert and Alpine, each of which has a few multi-mission scenarios. The game also makes limited use of voice samples as Sarge makes little comments throughout. ■

FACT

The game's code contains a mine weapon that was never implemented in the game, probably because the AI always stops and shoots at you instead of running at you.

ARMY MEN 2

Year 2000
Publisher The 3DO Company
Developer Digital Eclipse



THE GBC PORT of the first Army Men went so well that a port of the PC-only sequel was released later that same year. Army Men 2 follows on from the ending of the first game, where the Tan army finds a strange portal and jumps into it. This portal leads to the 'real' world, meaning whereas the first game's environments were relatively realistic outdoor scenes (because everything took place in the Army Men's world), this time you can find yourself as a tiny soldier fighting other tiny soldiers in massive human world environments: a garden, a kitchen counter and the like. Despite the change of scenery the gameplay is more or less the same, so your feelings on the original will likely stay unchanged. ■

FACT

Before it was decided to make the characters toy soldiers, other ideas suggested to make the game more family-friendly included humans with green blood and robot soldiers.

ARMY MEN: AIR COMBAT

Year 2000
Publisher The 3DO Company
Developer Fluid Studios

IN A TWIST on the Army Men formula, Air Combat (known as Air Attack on non-Nintendo formats) ditched 'boots on the ground' missions in favour of helicopter action. While the console versions went for 3D polygonal environments, the Game Boy Color version instead opts for an isometric viewpoint, essentially turning it into a (reasonably decent) imitation of EA's Desert Strike. There are two pilots to choose from – one improves your winching ability and the other improves your machine guns – and over time you can upgrade your Huey chopper to a Super Stallion or an Apache. As well as your standard guns and rockets you can also find homing rockets and the not-so-subtle napalm bombs. ■

FACT

In real life the 'Huey' is the Bell UH-1 Iroquois military helicopter. When it started in the '50s it was originally called the HU-1 (hence Huey), but when it was renamed in the '60s the nickname stuck.

ARMY MEN: SARGE'S HEROES 2

Year 2000
Publisher The 3DO Company
Developer Game Brains

COMPLETELY UNRELATED TO the Sarge's Heroes 2 released on the N64, PS1 and PS2, this has an entirely different plot. The Tan army's evil leader General Plastro has returned and has started another attack on the Greens, so you have to choose between three soldiers – the colonel's daughter Vikki, the fireobsessed Scorch or the bazooka master Riff – and take them out. The console games were third-person action games but the GBC one is more like Air Combat in that it's strictly vehicle-based. This time, however, missions take place on land, air and sea, meaning you have a variety of vehicles available to you. These are character-specific, so while Riff may use a tank for the ground missions, Vikki will use a motorbike. ■

FACT

According to the manual, Scorch likes to 'torch Tan soldiers 'til they bubble', which I'm almost certain is a war crime, plastic or otherwise.

ARTHUR'S ABSOLUTELY FUN DAY!

Year 2000
Publisher The Learning Company
Developer Magnin & Associates

BASED ON THE young children's cartoon series *Arthur*, this is a minigame compilation, but one that actually involves tracking progress and a final goal. Arthur wants to go to the WonderWorld amusement park, so his teacher Mr Ratburn gives him a stamp card. If Arthur can collect 16 stars by playing 10 activities, he can get into the park, where there are more mini-games as a reward. Because it's aimed at young children, they don't have to play every game: if there's one they like best – be that basketball free throws, delivering newspapers, picking berries or sorting books at the library – they can keep doing that to get stars, though it does get trickier each time. ■

FACT

In one episode of *Arthur*, Mr Ratburn marries a chocolatier called Patrick. The episode was praised for the way it dealt with gay marriage as a normal, matter-of-fact event.

ASTERIX & OBELIX

Year 1999
Publisher Infogrames
Developer Bit Managers

JULIUS CAESAR HAS started to build an enormous fence around the small village in Gaul that continues to disrupt his plans. Far from impressed, and not convinced that such a Trumpian technique would successfully keep them imprisoned, Asterix and Obelix hatch a plan: travel the world, collect souvenirs from all over and present them to Caesar as proof that they can't be constrained, and are actually free to go wherever they like. If this all sounds a bit familiar, that's because Asterix & Obelix was already covered in the previous section of this book, and the Game Boy Color version is basically just the same game with colour added. It's very nice colour though, for what it's worth. ■

FACT

The title screen simply says Obelix, as if the game was going to be called that until someone realised not having Asterix's name in there was probably a bad move.

ASTERIX & OBELIX VS CAESAR

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Cryo Interactive Cryo Interactive

THERE HAVE BEEN numerous animated Asterix movies over the years, but in 1999 the first ever live-action take on the comics was released, most notably with Gérard Depardieu in the role of Obelix. Since it had the largest budget of any French-made film to that date, a video game tie-in was no real surprise: the real surprise was how badly received it was compared to other Asterix games. Rather than going down the platformer route again, this is a series of tasks – punching fish, throwing menhirs at Romans, gathering mistletoe, collecting helmets – none of which were considered particularly well executed. Ultimately, while the film was a box office smash, the game was condemned as too frustrating and too difficult. Too bad. ■

FACT

Bizarrely, dataminers found that the game's code contains a bunch of text from Street Fighter Alpha's endings, as well as some graphics from it.

ASTERIX: SEARCH FOR DOGMATIX

Year 2000
Publisher Infogrames
Developer Rebellion

ASTERIX'S BELOVED PET Dogmatix has disappeared and he's certain the Romans have something to do with it. He heads off on a search which takes in six regions – Armorica, Lutetia, Massila, Alexandria, Memphis (the one in Egypt) and Rome – each consisting of a few platforming stages and mini-games. Each area lets you take on the stages in any order you choose, and as you access the mini-games they're added to an Instant Fun option on the main menu. These include a card-matching minigame, a top-down chariot race, a hieroglyph sliding puzzle and one called Throw a Roman, which is pretty self-explanatory. And don't worry, dog lovers: Asterix and Obelix do manage to find Dogmatix by the end of the game. ■

FACT

Although Dogmatix's name is a pun on dogmatic (having a belief with full certainty), his original French name is Idéfix, which is a pun on 'idée fixe' (a fixed idea, an obsession).

ASTEROIDS

Year 1999
Publisher Activision
Developer Syrox Developments

AS OPPOSED TO the rather straightforward Asteroids port released on the original Game Boy as part of the Arcade Classic series, this is a complete modern reimagining of Atari's classic. Now there's a plot: you've been hired by the Astro-Mining Corporation to visit numerous asteroid fields and destroy everything in sight to make space for the installation of equipment. Each stage includes a variety of different asteroid types (such as a diamond asteroid which reforms if you don't destroy it quickly enough), and the addition of power-ups makes things more interesting. There's also a range of two-player competitive modes, from a head-to-head battle to a variation on Tag where you have to bump into your opponent.

FACT

Sometimes a vector asteroid in the style of the original game will appear. If you destroy it, the year 1979 appears in the explosion.

ATLANTIS: THE LOST EMPIRE

Year 2001 *Publisher* THQ *Developer* Eurocom

ATLANTIS WAS AN animated Disney movie which struggled to do well in cinemas, its classic 2D animation style failing to appeal to an audience that had enjoyed *Shrek* the month before. Still, a video game tie-in was the order of the day regardless, hence this Game Boy Color platform adventure. The main gimmick here is the ability to switch between different characters at various times in each stage, each of whom has their own special skill: Milo can observe objects and 'decode' them (i.e. reveal secret passages), Vinny can blow up obstacles, Moliere can dig tunnels through the ground and Audrey can repair mechanical objects. By making use of each character's abilities it's possible to make it through the game's 11 stages. ■

FACT

Disney had planned a spin-off TV show, an underwater Disneyland ride and a volcano Magic Kingdom ride for Atlantis. All were scrapped when it underperformed at the box office.

ATV RACING

Year 2001
Publisher Rocket Games
Developer Unknown

ONE OF EIGHT unlicensed games released for the Game Boy Color by Rocket Games (aka Datel), ATV Racing is a racing game (obviously) viewed from an overhead perspective, in which you take on three others cars on little all-terrain vehicle buggy things. The game uses 2D tracks but the ATVs are pre-rendered to make them look 3D. There are nine tracks to choose from, set over three different environments, and there's a Championship mode with three cups to play through. the AI can be a little on the tricky side and suddenly gets really good without warning at times, but there are speed boosts on the track to help you keep up. It's a solid enough racing game, but it's relatively uncommon. ■

FACT

The other seven unlicensed Rocket Games titles (all in this book) are Full Time Soccer, Hang Time Basketball, Karate Joe, Painter, Pocket Smash Out, Race Time and Space Invasion.

AUSTIN POWERS: OH, BEHAVE!

Year 2000
Publisher Rockstar Games
Developer Tarantula Studios

WHEN YOU'VE GOT the licence to one of the biggest comedy movies of the decade, what do you do? If you answered 'create two weird fake desktop PC menus', then congratulations I guess. Oh, Behave! is designed to turn your Game Boy Color into Austin Powers' PC, with such 'groovy' tools as a calculator, a word processor (with Game Boy Printer support) and a fake internet browser where you can browse information on the first two Austin Powers movies. There are at least a couple of games on here, the meatiest being International Platform of Mystery. This is a half-decent platform game with 25 stages and, in the modern era, just about justifies the asking price on its own. ■

FACT

If you somehow know someone else with either of these 'games', you can use a Link Cable to trade backgrounds, or write and send emails to each other.

AUSTIN POWERS: WELCOME TO MY UNDERGROUND LAIR!

Year Publisher Developer

2000 Rockstar Games
Tarantula Studios

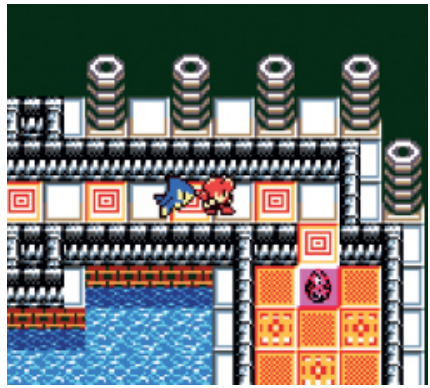
IF YOU'RE MORE of a fan of the dark side, don't worry: you haven't been left out of the 'bizarre fictional Austin Powers operating system' scene. Welcome to My Underground Lair! is the same sort of idea as its companion, but this time it's based on Dr Evil's computer. All the same gizmos are here too, though the wallpapers and screensavers are obviously now Dr Evil-themed and some of the tools have been renamed: the calculator was called the Shagulator in the other cart, here it's called the Frickulator. This also has its own decent-sized game to save the day: Kin' Evil is based on Tarantula's Game Boy Color game Evel Kneivel and has you navigating courses as Dr Evil and Mini-Me. ■

FACT

There were actually supposed to be two more of these. Yeah, Baby, Yeah! was based on the women from the movies, while Why Make Millions…? was about the henchmen.

AZURE DREAMS

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Konami Konami



THIS DUNGEON CRAWLER RPG was originally released on the PlayStation in 1997 before being brought to the Game Boy Color. It's set in the town of Monsbaiya, where you have to team up with a monster called Kewne to ascend the nearby Monster Tower and find out what happened to Guy, a local monster tamer who entered and disappeared. the GBC version ditches a lot of the PS1 version's features, such as the relationship and town building systems. In some ways, however, it actually makes improvements: there's an extra 99-floor dungeon at the end of the game, complete with a second ending, and – clearly influenced by Pokémon – the game now has more than 100 monsters to collect rather than the PlayStation game's 50. ■

FACT

Eight years after Azure Dreams was released, Konami made a spiritual successor for the DS called Tao's Adventure: Curse of the Demon Seal.

BABE AND FRIENDS

Year 1999
Publisher Crave Entertainment
Developer Aqua Pacific

BASED ON THE popular movie about the world's first sheep-pig, Babe and Friends has you playing as the titular porker as he makes use of his sheep-herding skills. The game takes place over seven stages – the countryside, an airport, a hotel, the city, a hospital, a mansion and back to the countryside – and the general aim in each of these is to make use of Babe's talents to guide a series of sheep through slalom gates dotted around. If Babe stands next to a sheep and 'barks', the sheep will run off in the opposite direction: in this way, you can guide the sheep around each stage by positioning yourself at the right angle to send it off in the direction you want it to go. ■

FACT

During the shooting of the first movie, Babe was played by 48 pigs because they grew so quickly.

BABY FELIX: HALLOWEEN

Year	2001
Publisher	Light and Shadow Production
Developer	Bit Managers

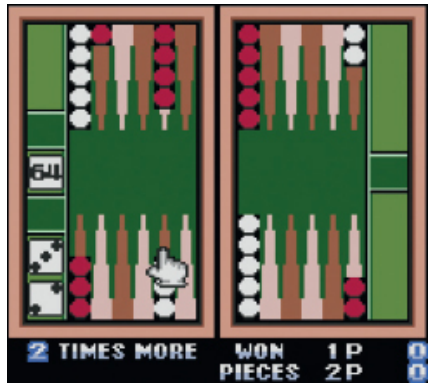
JAPAN LOVED FELIX the Cat so much that a spinoff animated series called *Baby Felix & Friends* was created there. This charming platformer was released to tie in with it, and has you playing as either Baby Felix or Baby Kitty Cat as they explore a haunted house in search of their friends (who'd gone in earlier and got lost). Although the title means there's a clear Halloween theme here, it only really affects the first of the game's five stages: the others take place in a prehistoric world, space, a pirate island and the Old West. Mechanically it ticks all the usual boxes you'd expect from a platformer, but the fun animations and catchy music make it worth a look. ■

FACT

In case the idea of a game about a Japanese cartoon only being released in Europe isn't zany enough for you, it was also released in December despite the subject matter.

BACKGAMMON

Year 2000
Publisher JVC Music Europe
Developer Altron



WHEN A GAME has a title this basic it's probably fair to assume that its contents will be similarly basic. Yes, Backgammon at its core is a fairly standard digital interpretation of the popular board game, so in that sense you would be right. Developer Altron has at least attempted to add some sort of variety to proceedings, though, most notably with its Tournament mode, where you play against a series of increasingly difficult AI opponents, each with their own personalities. The option menu also lets you tweak the rules to something that better suits how you play Backgammon, so if you want to turn off the beaver rule you can. And if you don't know what the beaver rule is, that says more about you. ■

FACT

Sigh, okay: the beaver rule is used in money play and basically says that if you agree to play a game with double the stakes, you can immediately choose to double them again.

BALLISTIC

Year 2000
Publisher Infogrames
Developer Mitchell Corporation

BETTER KNOWN BY its original Japanese arcade title Puzz Loop, Ballistic is a colourmatching game that would become more popular around 15 years down the line when games like Zuma and Luxor decided to… let's just say borrow liberally from it. The game area consists of a spiral track leading to the player's gun in the middle of the screen. Coloured marbles start rolling along the track, and you have to shoot more marbles at them in an attempt to line up three of the same colour, which in turn makes them disappear. As the loop gets longer it starts to overlap itself, making it harder to hit certain sections of the line. If the marbles reach the middle, it's Game Over. ■

FACT

In 2006 a game called Magnetic was released on the DS. This is the official modern equivalent of Ballistic, because it was made by the same developer.

BARBIE: FASHION PACK GAMES

Year 2000
Publisher Mattel Interactive
Developer Hyperspace Cowgirls

IN THE LATE 90s, Mattel launched the Barbie Software for Girls line, designed to get girls more interested in games and computers. While most of these were PC CD-ROM titles, four of them made their way to the Game Boy Color. Fashion Pack Games has perhaps the least depth of the four, offering eight fashion-themed mini-games, each designed around a different item of clothing. Whether it's catching shoes with a bag, matching up t-shirts or collecting drops of perfume in a bottle, each minigame is part of an overall goal to customise Barbie (or her friends Christie, Kira or Teresa). Every time you beat a mini-game you'll unlock a design for that item of clothing and can then use it on your in-game Barbie. ■

FACT

There have been around 60 Barbie video games released over the years. Her elbows even bend in most of them, which is a clear improvement over the real thing.

BARBIE: MAGIC GENIE ADVENTURE

Year 2000
Publisher Mattel Interactive
Developer Vicarious Visions

IN A PLOT that may be slightly borderline these days, Magic Genie Adventure has you playing as ‘Genie Barbie’ as she flies around on a magic carpet carrying out tasks for people. An evil sultan called Kardal has stolen the magic lamps from Barbie’s genie friends, so you have to visit five mystical lands in an attempt to get them back. As you fly around on your carpet you can talk to the residents of these lands, some of whom will give you fetch quests. There’s also an Activity Mode where you get to play seven mini-games, from a basic platformer where you teach a Pegasus how to jump, to a puzzle game where you drop falling crystals on various elements to make them disappear. ■

FACT

Around the same time, PC players got Barbie Magic Genie Bottle, a game bundled with a big giant genie bottle that connects to the PC. Players rub the bottle to play the game. Look, I don’t know.

BARBIE: OCEAN DISCOVERY

Year 1999
Publisher Mattel Interactive
Developer Realtime Associates

OCEAN DISCOVERY WAS originally released on the PC in 1997 and was Mattel's first attempt at publishing a Barbie video game (as opposed to the previous 8-bit and 16-bit ones, which had been licensed out). It was popular enough to encourage Mattel to keep making Barbie games, and a couple of years later Ocean Discovery was ported to the Game Boy Color. In this game, jill-of-all-trades Barbie is a marine biologist with two goals: finding hidden treasure underwater, and trying to protect ocean animals. There are three areas to swim around – the Coral Reef, the Sunken Ship and the Crystal City – each with their own treasure to find, as well as minigames to play. ■

FACT

The PC version was praised by the *New York Times* for mentioning that Barbie has a degree in marine biology, something it called a 'nod toward enlightenment' for girls' video games.

BARBIE: PET RESCUE

Year 2001
Publisher Vivendi Universal Interactive
Developer HotGen

MARINE BIOLOGY? PFFT, old news mate. Now Barbie's working at a pet rescue centre: try to keep up. Turns out it's a bad time to be working at the old PRC, though, because a massive storm has just struck Green Arbor Park, causing countless pets, farm animals and exotic zoo animals to run off. Barbie has to take phone calls from people who've lost their animals, then head out and catch them, take them back to the PRC, treat them in a Tamagotchistyle manner, then get them back to their owners. Along the way there are other mini-games, some of which are quite tenuous. One Breakout-style game, for example, has you breaking blocks of ice to free a penguin from an ice cream van. ■

FACT

Numerous Barbie games of this era mention during the copyright screen that the 'Barbie Pink' colour is a trademark. In reality, the colour (Pantone 219 C) was never registered as a trademark.

BASS MASTERS CLASSIC

Year Publisher Developer 1999 THQ Natsume

YOU CAN KEEP your modern Bassmasters, this is old-school. Ho ho, I'm just pulling your leg: the Bassmaster Classic is of course a bass fishing tournament set up by the Bass Anglers Sportsman Society in 1971. 'Tell me something I don't know, Chris,' you say. Well, this Game Boy version lets you choose from a selection of male and female anglers then gives you the choice to practise on one of its lakes or take on the main Tournament mode, where you enter a series of tourneys in an attempt to finally reach the BMC (as all the cool kids call it). There are six types of lure available to you, from topwater lures to 'jerk bait', which is also what the cool kids call me. ■

FACT

The heaviest bass ever caught at the Bassmaster Classic was 11 pounds and 10 ounces. That's slightly heavier than a gallon of paint.

BATMAN: CHAOS IN GOTHAM

Year 2001
Publisher Ubisoft
Developer Digital Eclipse

THEY REALLY NEED to get rid of whoever runs the security at Arkham Asylum, because it appears that Gotham's worst villains are constantly breaking out. In Chaos in Gotham a whole host of them are back on the streets, meaning Batman (and occasionally Batgirl) has to gather them up and get them back behind bars again. The game is based on the animated series *The New Batman Adventures*, and consists of seven stages where you take on the Joker, Harley Quinn, the Penguin, Poison Ivy, Roxy Rocket, Bane and finally Two-Face. Most of the action is side-scrolling platforming but there's also a top-down driving section in the Batmobile and a third-person one where Batgirl rides a motorbike. ■

FACT

The *New Batman Adventures* was the third season of *Batman: The Animated Series* and focused more on Batman's chums Robin, Batgirl and Nightwing.

BATMAN BEYOND: RETURN OF THE JOKER

Year 2000
Publisher Ubisoft
Developer Kemco

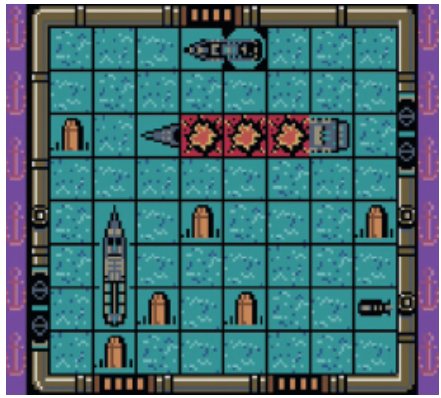
RETURN OF THE Joker was an animated movie released direct-to-video, designed to draw a conclusion to the *Batman Beyond* animated series. This game adaptation is a beat 'em up in which you play as the new-and-improved future Batman, Terry McGinnis (Bruce Wayne is in his 70s here) over the course of five stages: the Gotham Air & Space Museum, Wayne Enterprises, Arkham Asylum, an office and the Jolly Jack Candy Factory. While the N64 and PlayStation version of Batman Beyond was criticised for being repetitive and incredibly short, the Game Boy Color rendition was received a little better for having less frustrating combat and lasting a little longer, and as such is considered the best of the bunch. ■

FACT

In the movie, the Joker was originally shot dead, but before release this was changed to electrocution due to the Columbine massacre. The uncut version eventually came to DVD.

BATTLESHIP

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Majesco Pack-In Video



JUST IN CASE you were worried that none of the oddly high number of Battleship games on the original Game Boy would carry over to the Game Boy Color, here's one of them for you. Battleship is based on the 1992 Game Boy release, but unlike some GB-to- GBC ports it's not just a colourised version of the original game. It's not far off it, mind you, but there have at least been a few attempts to improve the presentation a little, with menu screens showing control panels and the like instead of just white screens with text, and a water texture underneath the grid to give a better sense that this is a naval battle. It's the same game, then, just a little nicer looking. ■

FACT

The Battleship board game was updated in 2008 with a hexagonal grid, and little islands where you could put captured prisoners. When the Battleship movie came out, it went back to the old style.

BATTLETANX

Year 2000
Publisher The 3DO Company
Developer Lucky Chicken Games

IN THE YEAR 2001, a deadly virus kills off 99% of the female population, and the remaining women, now referred to as ‘queenlords’, are being held captive by different gangs each in control of their own small part of the world. One man who’s had it with this not-ideal scenario is Griffin Spade, whose fianceé Madison has gone missing, so he jumps in a ruddy big tank and heads off to find her, putting big holes in anything that stands in his way. BattleTanx was originally released on the N64 in 1998 but the Game Boy Color clearly couldn’t cope with its third-person exploration, so instead the handheld version opts for a top-down perspective similar to the original Grand Theft Auto. ■

FACT

BattleTanx (the N64 version, at least) was inspired by Tokyo Wars, a 1996 arcade game by Namco where you drive around cities in tanks, blowing things up.

BEAR IN THE BIG BLUE HOUSE

Year 2001
Publisher Ubisoft
Developer Ubisoft

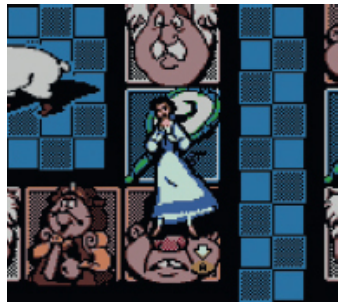
THE JIM HENSON Company's children's TV show became huge when it started in the late '90s, so this Game Boy Color game was made for very young players trying video games for the first time. It's the bear cub Ojo's birthday, so you have to help Ojo wander around the Big Blue House in search of puzzle pieces so she can complete a birthday-themed jigsaw puzzle. She collects the pieces by playing the seven mini-games which can be found around the house: there's one where you have to catch feathers in a sack, one where you're in a bath and have to spray water at your friend, and it obviously wouldn't be a children's game without a card-matching mini-game. ■

FACT

Bear's puppeteer, Noel MacNeal, would go on to work on HBO topical comedy show *Last Week Tonight With John Oliver*, where he would portray giant squirrel mascot Mr Nutterbutter.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: A BOARD GAME ADVENTURE

Year 1999
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Left Field Productions



BELLE AND HER father have been locked in a cell, while Gaston and his mob are charging the Beast's castle to kill him. Belle manages to escape, but Gaston has a head start: can she overtake him and warn the Beast before the mob can take him by surprise? That's the premise behind this video board game take on Disney's award-winning animated movie. There are three boards to play through in order – the Village, the Forest and the Castle – and in each Gaston moves a set number of spaces each time. In the last board he moves six spaces with each turn, which seems impossible to beat, but that's where the mini-games come in, because doing well in these earns you extra moves. ■

FACT

Although you can only play as Belle in the singleplayer Story mode, there's also a multiplayer mode for 1–4 players where you can play as Belle, Beast, Mrs Potts or Lumiere.

BENJAMIN BLÜMCHEN: EIN VERRÜCKTER TAG IM ZOO

Year 2001
Publisher Kiddinx
Developer BVM Produktion

BENJAMIN BLÜMCHEN, KNOWN in English-speaking countries as Benjamin the Elephant, is a German cartoon series based on a series of children's radio plays about a friendly elephant (who's somehow managed to find human clothes that fit him) who likes to go on adventures and help people. This Game Boy Color game (translated as A Crazy Day at the Zoo) sees Benjamin and his friend Otto being hired by a newspaper reporter to take photos of the animals at the zoo. Rather than using a good zoom lens, they instead get a bit close for comfort, resulting in a sixstage platformer where you have to skate through the penguin enclosure, swim with fish and race an ostrich, among other things. ■

FACT

The first Benjamin Blümchen radio play aired in Germany in 1977. At the time of writing they're still going to this day, with more than 150 stories broadcast as of 2023.

BIBI BLOCKSBERG: IM BANN DER HEXENKUGEL

Year 2001
Publisher Kiddinx
Developer BVM Produktion

BY THE SHEER luck of alphabetical order, Bibi Blocksberg is another series of German radio plays for children, written by the same author and taking place in the same universe. Bibi is a 13-year-old witch who likes to play practical jokes on her friends at school, and often uses her magic to help people in town. Im Bann Der Hexenkugel (which roughly translates to Under the Crystal Ball's Spell) is a Zelda-style adventure where Bibi has to find the seven broken parts of a crystal ball and repair it to break a spell that's made all the witches in town go mad. The game takes place over seven stages, each of which has an extra magic power which can be collected and used on your travels. ■

FACT

In the first seven radio plays, Bibi has a little brother called Boris. He then moves to his grandparents' house in the North Sea and is never mentioned again. Hope he's okay.

BIBI UND TINA: FOHLEN 'FELIX' IN GEFAHR

Year 2002 *Publisher* Kiddinx *Developer* BVM Produktion

YOU'RE NOT GOING to believe this. This is another Game Boy Color game based on another German radio series, although this time it's a spin-off of Bibi Blocksberg. Bibi und Tina stars Bibi again (and her friend, whose name escapes me) but although she's still a witch the focus here is on Bibi's love of horseback riding. In the game (whose title translates to Felix the Foal in Danger), Bibi and Tina have to find a foal who's gone missing. The aim in each of the game's six stages is to find clues of Felix's whereabouts, while also collecting three bags of horse food to progress to the next level. This one's more plot-heavy, and is only in German. ■

FACT

Four live-action Bibi und Tina movies were released in Germany between 2014 and 2017. Amazon then added a live-action series to Prime Video in 2020. There's an English dub. It's not great.

BILLY BOB'S HUNTIN'-NFISHIN'

Year 1999
Publisher Midway
Developer Saffire

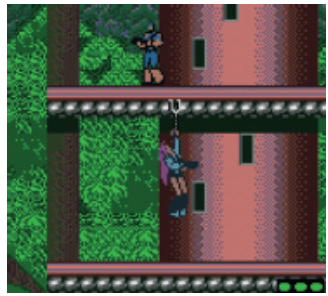
THIS STEREOTYPE ‘EM up has you playing as a hillbilly called Billy Bob as he tries to win the heart of his sweetheart Daisy Mae. Problem is, her dad only approves of men who can kill animals, so she sends Billy Bob out to catch three fish and three land animals – at first it’s three bass and three rabbits, but by the end of the game it’s three triple-eyed mutant fish and three bears – before she’ll give him any attention. Before you can do this you need to complete mini-games to get bait, ammo and licences (otherwise the ranger will chase you) and even when you catch everything you still need to arm-wrestle her father and mother for her hand. Yes, really. ■

FACT

The game’s programmers Eric Tolman and Hung Nguyen still work together to this day. At the time of writing, both have been software engineers on The Sims series since the mid- 2000s.

BIONIC COMMANDO: ELITE FORCES

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Nintendo Nintendo



ALTHOUGH YOU MAY associate the Bionic Commando series with Capcom, Elite Forces was actually handled by Nintendo, and was the first game created by its US firstparty studio NST. The evil Avar Empire wants to invade the nation of Karinia, so Commander Joe was sent to infiltrate the Avars and was kidnapped. Playing as either a female or male commando, you have to rescue Commander Joe and defeat the Avars. As in previous Bionic Commando games, you can't jump in Elite Forces but are instead armed (literally) with an extending grappling claw which can be used to grab onto platforms and pull you up. Each character has their own weapons and takes a slightly different route through the game. ■

FACT

There are now new sniper sections in the game, where at certain points you're given a limited time to find and snipe enemies from a first-person perspective. You get an airdrop if successful.

BLACK BASS: LURE FISHING

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Majesco Hot-B

THIS IS ANOTHER of those Game Boy Color titles which are just Game Boy games with a shiny, colourful new lick of paint. For the most part Black Bass: Lure Fishing is identical to the Game Boy game of the same name, meaning you once again start at rank 100 and have to catch enough bass at a tournament to work your way up three classes of rankings. The two lakes Clear Lake and Storm Lake remain, as does the Special Techniques menu which lets you perform one-off abilities, such as a special frog lure which can be used near lily pads to instantly attract a fish. There are a couple of tiny visual tweaks: the map screen, for example, now shows scenery instead of a grid. ■

FACT

Like the Game Boy version, the game's soundtrack mainly consists of classical music. The title screen, for example, is 'Waltz of the Flowers' from *The Nutcracker*.

BLADE

Year	2000
Publisher	Activision
Developer	HAL Laboratory

BASED ON THE 1998 Wesley Snipes movie, Blade has you playing as the titular dhampir (a human with vampire abilities) as he wanders through various locations in the city, killing a slew of vampires. The game is mainly split into three types of gameplay: the first of these is a lightgun-style shooting gallery where you use the B button to shoot at enemies who appear either side of you, and the A button to bring up a crosshair and shoot enemies in the distance. After this is a sidescrolling action section, where you can punch enemies to dust while blocking their own attacks. Finally, boss battles take the form of one-onone fights in which Blade is armed with his trusty sword. ■

FACT

Some of the dialogue is up there with Dickens. Example: 'I'm going to enjoy killing you, Blade.' 'You can enjoy trying, scum!'

BLASTER MASTER: ENEMY BELOW

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Sunsoft Sunsoft

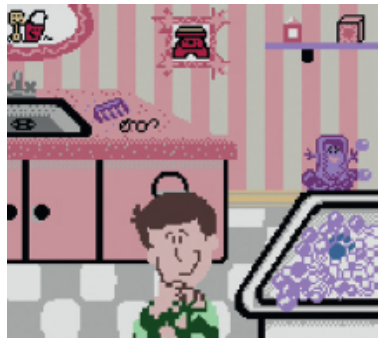
SET AFTER THE events of the first Blaster Master on the NES, Enemy Below sees that game's protagonist Jason being asked to explore a remote research facility and destroy a newly created life form that's part creature, part machine and all nasty. The game plays similar to its NES predecessor, with the action once again switching between two different viewpoints. Part of the game is a side-scrolling platformer, with Jason driving his tank Sophia. When he encounters a cave or a building, Jason can then leave Sophia and enter it, switching the action to an overhead view. The main difference in Enemy Below is that players now have to find a key in these overhead sections before they can face the boss, but otherwise it's similar. ■

FACT

As with the NES game, the Japanese version (which is called Metafight EX) has a completely different plot about trying to get rid of giant kaiju-like monsters.

BLUE'S CLUES: BLUE'S ALPHABET BOOK

Year 2001
Publisher Mattel Interactive
Developer Vicarious Visions



MUCH LIKE THE Bear in the Big Blue House game, this was designed for young fans of Nickelodeon's educational show *Blue's Clues* to help them learn while also getting used to video game controls. Blue's book is missing its pages, so you need to play her game Blue's Clues to find them. This involves playing three mini-games (from a possible six), then using them to collect clues, which in turn will tell you where a missing page can be found. The mini-games are each based on characters from the show, so Mr Salt and Mrs Pepper will ask players to find matching ingredients, Sidetable Drawer has a xylophone game and Slippery Soap is the one with the obligatory cardmatching game. ■

FACT

Blue is female, but because she's blue and has a magenta coloured friend (called Magenta, no less) it's a popular misconception that she's a boy dog.

BOARDER ZONE

Year Publisher Developer

1999 Infogrames Software Creations

THIS VISUALLY IMPRESSIVE snowboarding game uses a pseudo-3D effect to give the impression that you're going down a bumpy hill, a trick that's actually quite effective. The game's roster consists of four snowboarding youngsters – Canadian school gymnast Sandy, American semi-pro Travis, French Alps resident Alain and confident Austrian Tara – each with their own speed, balance and jumping stats. The game's event types include Race Attack (where you race against another snowboarder), Trick Attack (where you have to score a certain number of points doing mid-air tricks) and Slalom Attack (where you have to race in between flags to avoid time penalties). There are only three slopes to choose from, but there's a hidden fourth one (enter the password 020971 to unlock it). ■

FACT

The European version of the game is called Supreme Snowboarding: this applies to both the Game Boy version and the visually superior PC one.

BOB ET BOBETTE: LES DOMPTEURS DU TEMPS

Year 2001
Publisher Witan Entertainment
Developer Engine Software

BOB ET BOBETTE is a Belgian comic series known in the UK as *Spike and Suzy*, in the US as *Willy and Wanda*, and as *Suske en Wiske* in its native Belgium. This video game adaptation (loosely translated to The Time Tamers) is a platform game in which the two friends – who are each playable throughout – have to rescue their friend, who's been kidnapped by an escapee from the local asylum. The game takes place over five locations, each with two stages: a haunted castle, a pirate ship, prehistoric times, a pyramid and a space station. Realism isn't a concern here, clearly. Given that it was only released in a handful of countries in Europe, it can only be played in Dutch or French. ■

FACT

In 2009 a CGI movie based on the pair called *Luke and Lucy: The Texas Rangers* was released, along with a Nintendo DS tie-in game.

BOB THE BUILDER: FIX IT FUN!

Year	2000
Publisher	BBC Multimedia / THQ
Developer	Tiertex

BOB WANTS TO go for a picnic in the countryside with his friends, but before he can there are a bunch of things at home that need to be fixed (by which I mean furniture and stuff, not his relationship with his partner or anything deep like that). There are nine jobs (i.e. mini-games) in total, so it's decided that Bob will take on some of them – fixing Mrs Potts' fence, repairing the town hall roof, finding sheet music for a band, collecting mail for Mr Dixon, collecting herrings to feed his cat Pilchard – while his machine friends will do the others. Once all nine jobs are done there's one more task: Scoop has to gather all the hidden picnic items on the way to the countryside. ■

FACT

The *New Yorker* magazine once published a cartoon in which a parent is in a toy shop asking if they have any toys of Bob the Builder's white-collar equivalent, Alex the Architect.

BOMBERMAN MAX: BLUE CHAMPION / RED CHALLENGER

Year 2000
Publisher Vatical Entertainment
Developer Hudson Soft

BY THE END of the ‘90s Hudson was trying all sorts of gimmicks with its Bomberman games (mostly on other consoles), from side-scrolling platformers to party and racing games. Bomberman Max was an attempt to bring things back to the series’ roots with a straightforward single-player adventure in which either Bomberman or his cyborg ally Max have to clear 100 stages of enemies. There is one rather obvious Pokémon-like gimmick, as noted by the title(s). There are two versions of the game, each with 60 shared stages and 20 exclusive stages. To get all 100 stages, then, you have to connect to someone else with the other version. Also, Bomberman is the protagonist in Blue, while it’s Max in Red. ■

FACT

A third version of the game, Ain Version, was given away in a contest by stationery company Pentel. It’s basically the Blue version but with all 100 stages unlocked and some in-game ads.

BOMBERMAN QUEST

Year Publisher Developer

1999 Electro Brain / Virgin Interactive Hudson Soft

ONE OF THE many Bomberman gimmicks referred to on the previous page was Bomberman Quest, a top-down action RPG in the style of The Legend of Zelda games. The story goes that Bomberman is flying a bunch of captured monsters back to Planet Bomber when the four engines of his ship are stolen. He crash-lands on an unknown planet and the monsters escape. Bomberman has to find the Four Commanders who stole his engine parts and get them back, while recapturing all the monsters in the process. There's also a Battle Game mode for two players, but to make things a little more interesting you can equip items you've collected in the single-player mode to give you an edge. ■

FACT

There are two endings, depending on whether you manage to get all the monsters or not, but they aren't massively different so don't knock yourself out trying.

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

Year Publisher Developer 2000 THQ Game Brains

THE FIRST VIDEO game based on the hugely popular teen vampire-killing TV series, Buffy landed on the Game Boy Color a week before the fifth season started. The game has you playing as Buffy, who's trying to figure out why there's an unusually high number of vampires wandering around Sunnydale. Her journey takes her through eight locations – the graveyard, the Bronze nightclub, the sewers, Sunnydale Zoo, the Crawford Street mansion, the Initiative lab, the Hellmouth and a chamber inside it – while kicking and punching her way through a variety of vampires. Rather than simply draining their energy, Buffy kills vampires by fighting with them until they fall over, then jamming a stake through their heart (leg sweeps are very much recommended). ■

FACT

Although this was the first Buffy video game, Buffy did appear before this in Sci-Fi Pinball, a PC pinball game with tables based on Buffy, Aliens, Predator and The Fly.

BUGS BUNNY: CRAZY CASTLE 3

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Nintendo Kemco

GIVEN THE CONSTANT renaming and relicensing of the Crazy Castle series on the Game Boy and NES, it's somewhat reassuring that the Game Boy Color version of Crazy Castle 3 is a Bugs Bunny game in all regions. When Bugs visits an antique shop one day, he finds an ancient book called *The Treasure of the Lost Castle*. Keen to find the treasure for himself, Bugs heads off to the castle, not realising that it's a Crazy(™) one, and that it's currently being guarded by other Looney Tunes characters, all of whom are under the spell of Witch Hazel and trying to stop Bugs. Players have to collect all the keys to make it through all 61 stages. ■

FACT

The game didn't entirely avoid being renamed. Before it came to the GBC with Bugs Bunny branding, it was given a Japan-only release on the original Game Boy as a Kid Klown game.

BUGS BUNNY IN CRAZY CASTLE 4

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Kemco Kemco

ONE OF THE most extensive games in the Crazy Castle series (and one that once again featured Bugs Bunny in every region), Crazy Castle 4 opens with Bugs cleaning up his home and discovering an old map which leads to ‘C Castle’. Forgetting what the C stood for, Bugs assumes it’s Carrot and leaves with the map in search of a feast. Of course, you guessed it, the C stands for Crazy(™) and so he once again finds himself up against a host of Looney Tunes characters – all villains this time, so there’s no need for brainwashing – as he explores. This time the game’s 100 stages aren’t just set in the castle: Bugs’ journey takes him through forests, caves, mountains and jungles. ■

FACT

The last Crazy Castle game was released on the Game Boy Advance, and just to mess around with the licensing one more time it starred Woody Woodpecker instead.

A BUG’S LIFE

Year Publisher Developer 1998 THQ / Activision Tiertex

PIXAR'S SECOND MOVIE (and one of its most underrated) got its obligatory movie tie-in with this side-scrolling platformer. Playing as the protagonist Flik, you have to stop the grasshoppers terrorising your ant colony by heading to the city, finding a group of bigger bugs and convincing them to protect the ants. As well as the typical platforming convention of jumping on enemies' heads to kill them, Flik can also collect berries and throw them at his foes instead. The game takes place over eight stages but the focus is mainly on the back half of the movie: the entire process of going into the city and finding the circus bugs is over by the end of stage 2. ■

FACT

At one point the movie was going to be called *Bug Story*, but Pixar decided against it to make sure people didn't think movies with 'Story' was going to be the gimmick going forwards.

BUST-A-MOVE 4

Year 1999
Publisher Acclaim
Developer Crawfish Interactive

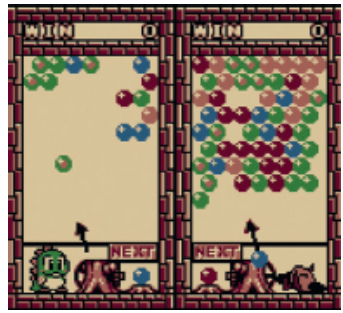
WHILE THERE WERE two Bust-a-Move (aka Puzzle Bobble) games on the standard Game Boy, let's face it: when a game is fundamentally about popping coloured bubbles you really do need some hues in there to make it play as originally intended. The fourth game in the series, Bust-a-Move 4, revolves around the Rainbow – the light source of Planet BubbleLuna – which has been stolen by the Fairy of the Night. Luckily there's a backup, which involves visiting the seven corners of the universe and collecting the coloured light bubbles to build another Rainbow. Such nonsense is obviously just there to give a reason for more bubble-popping play, with three main options: Puzzle (clearing rounds), Player vs CPU (competitive battles) and Challenge (a ranking mode). ■

FACT

There have been more than 15 official releases in the series, with the last major one (at the time of writing) being Puzzle Bobble Everybubble on the Switch.

BUST-A-MOVE MILLENNIUM

Year 2000 *Publisher* Acclaim *Developer* Dreams Co



WHEREAS THE OTHER Bust-a-Move games on the Game Boy and GBC were based on previous arcade releases, this one is exclusive to Nintendo's handheld. This time it's about a gold puzzle which apparently keeps the people in Bubble World safe, but has (you guessed it) been stolen, plunging the world into chaos. Playing as Bub, you have to get the puzzle back and restore order. This story actually takes place in a proper Story mode with cut-scenes now, making it a little less flimsy than in the fourth game. Millennium also adds a Link Cable mode for two players allowing for head-to-head battles, something that wasn't possible in the Game Boy Color version of Bust-a-Move 4. Mechanically though, the game itself is similar. ■

FACT

Puzzle Bobble originally started as a prototype called Billiardesu, and used billiard balls. The Bubble Bobble characters were added to make the game appeal to a wider range of players.

BUZZ LIGHTYEAR OF STAR COMMAND

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Activision Traveller's Tales

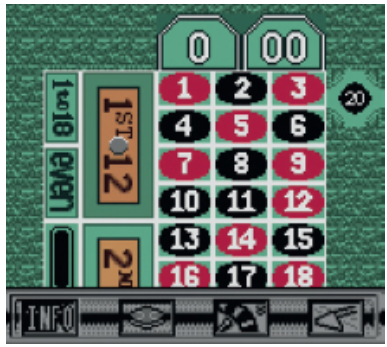
BASED ON THE short-lived animated series of the same name, Buzz Lightyear's Game Boy Color game may look different to the equivalent title on PlayStation and Dreamcast but the premise is the same. The evil emperor Zurg has sent his henchmen to various planets in the universe, so Buzz has to track down and defeat them all on the way to Zurg himself. Each stage is split into two parts: in the first you have to actually race against the henchman, with the aim being to reach the end of the stage before they do. Only if you can manage this can you then actually take them on in a boss fight.

FACT

In the cartoon series, Zurg is voiced by Wayne Knight, best known as Newman in *Seinfeld* and Dennis Nedry in *Jurassic Park*.

CAESARS PALACE II

Year 1999 *Publisher* Interplay *Developer* RuneCraft



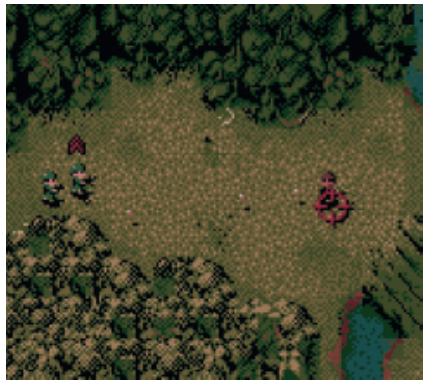
DON'T WORRY, THERE isn't a secret second Caesars Palace somewhere in Las Vegas that you didn't know about. This sequel to the Game Boy original takes you back to the iconic gambling den where you get to take on what the box claims is '19 games of chance' but is really only eight, because it counts the multiple poker rule sets, video poker machines and slot machines individually. Still, that at least means you can gamble your fake money on Blackjack, Mini Baccarat, Roulette, Poker, Video Poker, Slot Machines, Video Keno and Big 6. What's more, all the odds and pay-outs are authenticated by expert statistician William Betram PhD, and you can't pull the wool over that lad's eyes for love nor money (especially the latter). ■

FACT

Apparently, the most frequently repainted thing in Caesars Palace is the, um, chest area of the Cleopatra statue, because people apparently rub it for good luck. And that's the only reason.

CANNON FODDER

Year 2000
Publisher Codemasters
Developer Codemasters



ORIGINALLY RELEASED ON the Amiga in 1993, the GBC port of Cannon Fodder was praised for feeling right at home on the handheld despite being based on a point-andclick interface. The game has over 70 missions and tasks you with simply killing all the enemies on each stage. You do this by controlling your own group of soldiers, using a cursor to tell them where to run and where to shoot. Offering some of the best production values on the Game Boy Color, the game has animated video clips and a bunch of newly recorded digitised audio (including some rather disturbing death cries for your enemies). The only real downside is that the screen is zoomed in a bit, making it harder to plan ahead. ■

FACT

Although the game itself is designed to be anti-war, its original Amiga release was met with controversy in the UK press due to its 'war has never been so much fun' theme.

CARL LEWIS ATHLETICS 2000

Year 2000
Publisher Ubisoft
Developer Planet Interactive

IF YOU'D LIKE to break your Game Boy Color, you may wish to look into Carl Lewis Athletics 2000, which has all the button-bashing fun of a Track & Field game but without the ability to replace your controller when you overdo it a bit. Based on US gold medal winner Carl Lewis, the game has 14 events to choose from: 100m, Long Jump, Shot Put, High Jump, 400m, 110m Hurdles, Discus, Pole Vault, Javelin, 1500m, 4x100m Relay, 400m Hurdles, Hammer and 200m. It's also one of a handful of GBC games that features the 'Ubi Key' gimmick: if you've got a second handheld and another compatible Ubisoft game, you can use the infrared comms to unlock a bonus feature: in this case, a Decathlon mode. ■

FACT

Carl Lewis won no fewer than nine gold medals between the 1984 and 1996 Olympics: two for the 100m, two for the relay, one for the 200m and four for the long jump.

CARMAGEDDON

Year Publisher Developer

2000 Titus Software / Sales Curve Aqua Pacific

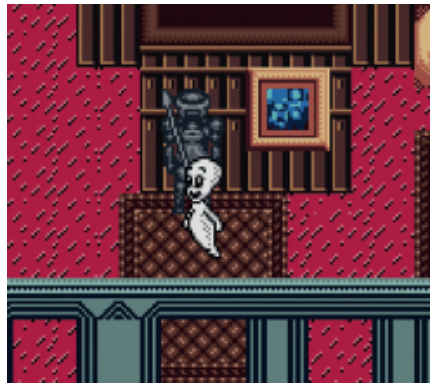
ALTHOUGH THE TITLE suggests this is based on the first Carmageddon game, it's actually based on its sequel Carmageddon II (hence its subtitle Carpocalypse Now on the title screen). It's a top-down interpretation of what's usually a 3D racing series, and the aim is largely the same as it is in the console versions: rather than a straight racing game, this is a racer where the roads are also infested with people (zombies in this version, to appease the censors). Races can be won in either of two ways: by killing a set number of zombies, or completing a set number of laps, before the timer runs out. It tends to be the case that a combination of the two is the best policy, however. ■

FACT

One of the characters in other versions of the game is called Jenny Taylia. This was changed to Jetcar in the GBC and N64 versions, no doubt disappointing fans of rude puns.

CASPER

Year 2000
Publisher Interplay
Developer G3 Interactive



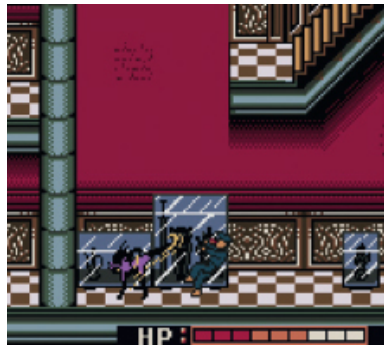
A GAME STARRING a dead child should be a hard sell on paper, but Casper pulls it off with aplomb. Based on the movie, Casper has nothing to do with the mini-game-heavy Game Boy offering and instead has you playing as the titular pre-teen poltergeist in an adventure game more similar to the version released on the PlayStation and Saturn. Casper has to explore Whipstaff Manor while trying to find out about the little girl who's just moved in with her dad, and has to figure out a way to befriend her. This involves floating around, investigating the Manor's various rooms, using keys to unlock doors and using Casper's morph abilities to get around. Turning into smoke, for example, lets him pass through air vents. ■

FACT

The house used in the *Casper* movie was also the house used in the music video for the Backstreet Boys' absolute banger, 'Everybody (Backstreet's Back)'.

CATWOMAN

Year 1999
Publisher Kemco
Developer Kemco



WHILE CATWOMAN WOULD eventually ‘enjoy’ her own criticallypanned movie starring Halle Berry, this Game Boy outing appeared five years earlier and is based on her DC Comics appearances instead. The villain Ra’s Al Ghul has his eye on a crystal skull which has the power to destroy cities, so he gets his daughter to hire Catwoman to steal it, not letting her know what it’s capable of. Catwoman decides she quite fancies it for herself, and thus begins a chase as she tries to shake off the (rightly) annoyed crooks. The game’s nine stages are standard action platforming fare, but most stages are non-linear and Catwoman has a surprisingly large repertoire of moves given how few buttons the Game Boy Color has. ■

FACT

Although Catwoman’s real name is Selina Kyle, she sometimes goes by the alias Irena Dubrovnia. This is the name of the protagonist in the classic 1942 movie thriller *Cat People*.

CATZ

Year 1999
Publisher Mindscape
Developer Saffire

AROUND ABOUT THE time Windows 95 launched, a fun little piece of PC software called Dogz was released which let players adopt a little cartoon puppy that would run around their desktop, tearing holes in windows and the like. It was popular enough to spawn a sequel called Catz, which was then given a Game Boy port a few years down the line. Naturally, the fun is diminished a little because the 'look, they're on your desktop' gimmick is replaced with a standard playroom setup but there's still fun to be had picking which breed you'd like to adopt then playing with them by throwing and rolling various toys around: a ball of yarn, some catnip, that sort of thing. ■

FACT

The first Dogz was created by an unexpected source: Rob Fulop, the codesigner of horror game Night Trap. He wanted to make a game that nobody could ever say was bad for kids.

CENTIPEDE

Year 1998
Publisher Majesco
Developer Accolade

AROUND THE SAME time as Majesco was being cheeky with its Game Boy re-release of Centipede (see its entry in the previous section), it also released a separate version for the Game Boy Color. It's almost exactly the same as the monochrome version: the music is the same, the sound effects are the same, the main menu options are the same. There is a slight difference to the visuals, however, in that the mushrooms dotted around the screen have been redrawn to more closely resemble the symmetrical mushrooms from the original arcade game. Much like its Game Boy sibling it's also missing Millipede, which was unceremoniously chopped from its Arcade Classic No 2 double-bill release. ■

FACT

Centipede's programmer Dona Bailey was one of the few women in America who knew assembly language. She was programming at GM when she discovered Space Invaders and decided to make video games.

CHAMPIONSHIP MOTOCROSS 2001 FEATURING RICKY CARMICHAEL

Year 2000
Publisher THQ
Developer Tiertex

THIS DIRT BIKE racing game does some clever things to make it stand out from the rest of the pack on Game Boy Color. The game includes 30 real-life pros to choose from, including Mr Carmichael himself, and lets you tune your bike's tyres, pipes, sprockets and the like. It's the actual racing on the track where this one really catches the eye, however: it makes use of pre-rendered FMV-style animations which show a chunk of track, and these are joined together to make it look like you're racing round the track in 3D. In reality all you're doing is sliding your bike left and right, but the illusion is believable. Less believable is how flawless your opponents race once they're out of sight. ■

FACT

Ricky Carmichael is considered the 'GOAT' of motocross, having won 15 AMA championships and five AMA Rider of the Year awards.

CHASE HQ: SECRET POLICE

Year 2000
Publisher Metro3D / Gaga Communications
Developer Dreams Co

WHEREAS THE ORIGINAL Chase HQ game was focused solely on chasing rogue drivers and ramming into them until they were forced to pull over, this Game Boy Color exclusive attempts to shake up the formula by adding a tactical element. This time, when you're given the call from dispatch to stop the criminal, you're shown a map screen and given control of numerous separate police cars. Only by positioning these cars strategically on the map can you intercept the crook, at which point the game then switches to the more traditional Chase HQ gameplay. Even then it's not the same: enemy cars are more durable, so it's more likely that you'll crash first, meaning you have to position another cop to step in and continue the pursuit. ■

FACT

In 1997, Taito released a 3D spiritual successor to Chase HQ on PlayStation, called Ray Tracers. The game has more or less been forgotten, especially now ray tracing means something else.

CHESSMASTER

Year 1999
Publisher Mindscape
Developer Park Place Productions

CHESSMASTER IS ONE of those Game Boy Color games that is, to all intents and purposes, the Game Boy version with colour added. You might think that this is a bit pointless given that this is literally a game where the pieces are traditionally black and white, but the GBC version of Chessmaster at least gives you a selection of colour schemes, meaning you can have red and blue pieces if you're the sort of wild hedonist who likes nothing more than blowing a defiant raspberry to the chess community. The Game Boy Color version does at least offer one other new feature: the ability to now use the Link Cable to play competitively with two Game Boys, instead of taking turns on a single handheld. ■

FACT

The number of possible 40-move games in chess is far more than the number of electrons in the observable universe. Unless, like this writer, you've lost long before 40 moves are reached.

CHICKEN RUN

Year 2000
Publisher THQ
Developer Blitz Games

WALLACE AND GROMIT studio Aardman Animations released its *Great Escape* spoof in the summer of 2000, and the video game adaptations arrived a few months later. Whereas the console versions were 3D stealth games, the Game Boy Color version is more of a puzzle game with slight hints of Lemmings to it. Playing as Ginger, you have to help the chickens reach the exit in each stage – in the farmyard at first, then the pie machine later – by laying chicken feed on the ground. By making a big pile of feed you can keep the chickens together in one place, and by placing small handfuls in a line you can make a path for them to follow, ideally out of harm's way. ■

FACT

It's said that the film's failure to be nominated for Best Picture at the Academy Awards led to the addition of the Best Animated Feature category at the following year's ceremony.

CLASSIC BUBBLE BOBBLE

Year 1999
Publisher Metro3D / Gaga Communications
Developer Dreams Co

ALTHOUGH THE NAME might suggest that this is a port of the first Bobble Bobble game, it's actually a brand new offering. Instead, the 'Classic' refers to the fact that there are no gimmicks or wacky powerups, just the core mechanics of spitting bubbles at enemies, trapping them in these bubbles then bursting them to kill them. That said, there is one new feature: sometimes when you clear a stage a door appears. Whether you go in the door or leave it affects which set of stages you take on next. Although the game promised to return players back to the good old simpler times of the Bubble Bobble series, critics complained that the game felt clunky, not least because Bub takes an eternity to fall. ■

FACT

In Japan, this and Chase HQ: Secret Police were both part of a short-lived series called Taito Memorial, which seemingly attempted to offer new versions of classic Taito games.

COLIN MCRAE RALLY

Year 2001
Publisher THQ
Developer Spellbound Entertainment

ALTHOUGH THERE HAD been rally games before Colin McRae Rally, when the first game was released on the PlayStation in 1998 it arguably did for the sport what the Tony Hawk series did for skateboarding, essentially redefining the genre overnight and making its star a household name among those who could never have named a rally driver before. It would take a few years before a handheld port was released, but as with many Game Boy Color versions of console games it ended up being a completely different type of game. Rather than the series' typical behind-the-car view, the GBC Colin McRae is viewed from an overhead perspective, but it still has a healthy selection of circuits and still contains spoken turn directions from your co-driver. ■

FACT

Although the playable cars include three Ford models, none are the Ford Focus, which is what Colin McRae was actually driving at the time the game was released.

COMMANDER KEEN

Year Publisher Developer

2001 Activision David A Palmer Productions

COMMANDER KEEN BEGAN life as the star of a series of MS-DOS PC games developed by id Software in the days before it released Doom. This Game Boy Color game isn't a port of any of them: it's a completely new game, bringing id's hero out of retirement after a decade. You play as Billy Blaze, a seemingly normal 8-year-old boy whose secret identity is space hero Commander Keen. Keen's old enemies have joined forces to destroy the universe, so he has to collect the three plasma crystals needed to stop them. The game is an action platformer in which Keen can blast enemies with his Neural Ray Blaster, while also using his trusty pogo stick to reach higher platforms. ■

FACT

When the first Commander Keen game was released in 1990, id Software was still going by its original name, Ideas from the Deep. This was later shortened to simply 'id'.

CONKER'S POCKET TALES

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Rare Rare

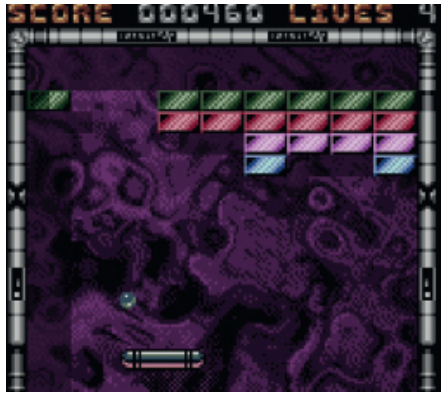
BEFORE 2001'S CONKER'S Bad Fur Day became the profanityladen, mature N64 game it was, it was a far more cute and cuddly game called Conker's Quest (and later Twelve Tales: Conker 64). This GBC adventure was developed during that family-friendly period, giving us a glimpse at what Conker could have been had Rare not decided to do a complete 180. The game follows Conker as he tries to hunt down the Evil Acorn, who's not only kidnapped Conker's girlfriend Berri but also stolen all the birthday presents she bought for him. Cue an adventure game played from an overhead perspective, where Conker can use a ground pound, his slingshot and the ability to dig through dirt to make progress.

FACT

The game saves differently depending on whether you're playing on GBC (whenever you want) or Game Boy (at set points). If you start on one and want to continue on the other you have to delete your save.

COOL BRICKS

Year	1999
Publisher	Sales Curve Interactive
Developer	Freestylez



NOT ALL GAMES have to reinvent the wheel in order to be effective. Not only does Cool Bricks not invent the wheel, it goes back to one of the earliest wheels ever created, which is admittedly where this analogy falls down a bit. What I'm saying is it's basically an enhanced take on Breakout (or, more accurately, its more detailed imitator Arkanoid), and simply has you breaking all the blocks to get through its more than 150 stages. Occasionally a power-up will fall from one of the bricks: this gives you such gimmickry as a gun (which lets you manually shoot the bricks), multiball and the like. Cool Bricks makes very little attempt to revolutionise its genre, but sometimes that's perfectly fine. ■

FACT

The game does at least make use of the GBC's 'high colour mode', in which developers can manipulate palette registers to show up to 2,000 colours on the screen rather than 50.

CROC

Year Publisher Developer 2000 THQ Virtucraft

THE PLAYSTATION VERSION of Croc is fondly remembered by players of a certain generation, because – as one of the earliest examples of the 3D platformer – for many of them it was their first experience of that genre. The same can't be said about the Game Boy Color version, because it takes the PS1 game and turns it into a more conventional 2D side-scrolling platformer. Croc has to make his way through 28 stages, taking in the typical forest, snow, desert and castle biomes, as he tries to find and rescue the kidnapped Gobbos, and deal out justice to their captor Baron Dante. Croc is armed (well, tailed) with a tail-whip move and can also execute a ground-pound to hit enemies and break blocks. ■

FACT

Around the same time as Croc was announced for the GBC, Fox said it was 'reviewing opportunities' to make a Croc cartoon series. Nothing came of it, though.

CROC 2

Year 2001
Publisher THQ
Developer Natsume

RATHER THAN GOING with another side-scrolling platformer for the second Croc port on Game Boy Color, Natsume decided to go for an overhead perspective to make the game feel at least a little more like the free-roaming 3D console version. After rescuing the Gobbos in the first game, Croc finds a message in a bottle at the beach. He's surprised to find it's from his parents, looking for their long-lost son. Croc heads off on an adventure to find his family, but it's far from a safe one, because Baron Dante is back on the scene too. While Croc 2 initially starts with similar missions to those in the PS1 version, it eventually heads off in its own direction and becomes its own bespoke adventure. ■

FACT

The GBC box art is the same as the PS1 box art, but the problem is that other than Croc and the Gobbo he's holding, nothing else on the cover is actually in the GBC version.

CRUIS'N EXOTICA

Year 2000
Publisher Midway
Developer Crawfish Interactive

BASED ON THE third game in the Cruis'n series (after Cruis'n USA and Cruis'n World), this does what the title suggests and offers racing action in a series of exotic locations from Ireland and the Sahara to Atlantis and Mars. Unusually for a Game Boy Color game, the racing gives the impression of a 3D environment (albeit a low-res one) with dipping roads and trackside obstacles. The game's main mode has you taking on each of the locations one at a time, requiring you to finish in first place before you can move onto the next one. This is oddly undone, however, by the second mode, Cruis'n Freestyle, which lets you pick any track from the start and thereby defeats the purpose of trying to earn them. ■

FACT

There were three more Cruis'n games after this: Cruis'n Velocity on the GBA, the awful Cruis'n on Wii and the excellent Cruis'n Blast on Switch.

CRYSTALIS

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Nintendo Nintendo

CRYSTALIS WAS SOMETHING of a hidden gem when it was released on the NES in 1990, and the same could probably be said of the Game Boy Color port a decade later. The game is a Zelda-style action RPG which has you travelling the land in search of the four magical swords of Wind, Fire, Water and Thunder so you can combine them to make the ultimate sword, Crystalis, and use it to bring down the evil Dragonia before he destroys the world. Although the GBC game is technically a port of the NES version, there are a host of changes, such as a vastly changed soundtrack, rewritten dialogue, a revised ending and a more zoomed-in view. ■

FACT

The NES Crystalis was included in the excellent SNK 40th Anniversary Collection on Switch, PS4, Xbox One and PC, making it available on non- Nintendo systems for the first time.

CUBIX: ROBOTS FOR EVERYONE – RACE ‘N ROBOTS

Year 2001
Publisher The 3DO Company
Developer Blitz Games

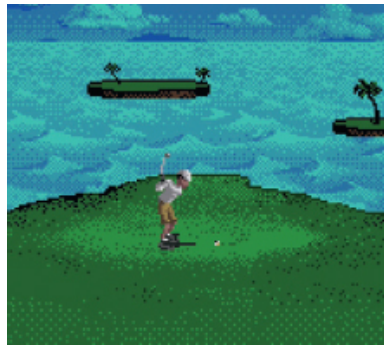
CUBIX WAS A South Korean cartoon that enjoyed a stint on the Kids' WB channel in the US, which is why this video game adaptation got a western release too. Rather than focusing on the show's main storyline – which is basically Pokémon with robots, as a young lad called Connor and his pet robot Cubix try to foil the evil Dr K – this spin-off instead revolves around a racing championship being held in the show's Bubble Town. Racing as either Cubix or one of three other robots – the agile but weak Dondon, the heavy but slow Maximix or the fast but slippery Quixtreme – you have to win a series of championships while making use of your Solex, which is basically a nitro boost. ■

FACT

The *Cubix* show ran for 26 episodes across two seasons. Connor was voiced by Andrew Rannells, who went on to be nominated for a Tony Award for his performance in *The Book of Mormon*.

CYBERTIGER

Year 2000 *Publisher* Electronic Arts *Developer* Xantera



DESIGNED TO MAKE golf games cooler and more appealing to a younger audience, CyberTiger initially lets you choose between four child golfers (including a kid version of Tiger Woods) and gives you three courses set in novelty locations: the Grand Canyon, Hawaii and a volcano. While for the most part the gameplay is straightforward enough, there are some limited-use power-ups such as the ability to hit your ball straight through obstacles like trees. There's also an odd Cybershot feature, where landing the ball on a certain part of the course will teleport it hundreds of yards ahead. Meanwhile, the Rapid Fire mode lets you play against another player or a CPU opponent, with both of you hitting your shots at the same time instead of taking turns. ■

FACT

This wasn't the only time EA got crazy with golf. 2014's EA Sports PGA Tour included fantasy courses, including one set in its Battlefield series where you hit balls over exploding ships.

DAFFY DUCK: FOWL PLAY

Year 1999
Publisher Sunsoft
Developer Sunsoft

ONE OF THE most impressively animated titles on the Game Boy Color, Fowl Play sees Daffy stumbling through six stages – Country, Lakeside, Snowy Mountain, Forest, Plateau and Desert – in search of gold while trying to put up with Bugs Bunny, who's trying to stop him for some reason or another. Along the way he can defeat the enemies he encounters by throwing an infinite supply of dynamite at them: this has to be well-aimed and well-timed, however, to avoid missing or even blowing himself up. The game also has an unusual death mechanic which almost feels like a Sonic game: when you die, you drop a small heart, and if you can pick that up before it disappears you get that life back again. ■

FACT

Daffy Duck appeared in 130 cartoons during the 'golden age' of Looney Tunes, making him the third most frequently starring character behind only Porky Pig (153) and Bugs Bunny (167).

DAIKATANA

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Kemco Will Co

SAY THE WORD ‘Daikatana’ to most retro players and they’ll immediately think of the disastrous PC and N64 first-person shooter that was supposed to be the next big thing from Doom and Quake co-developer John Romero but ended up being considered an outdated mess. What fewer people realise is that there was another Daikatana game, and it was a really good one. Ditching the FPS system in favour of a more handheld-friendly Zelda-style top-down action RPG, Daikatana takes the best thing about Romero’s game – the time-travelling storyline – and applies it to a genre where it’s given more room to breathe, adding fun dungeon exploration for good measure. the FPS game’s failure meant the GBC version wasn’t released in North America, but it’s worth tracking down. ■

FACT

Romero used to have the downloadable ROM file of the GBC version on his website available for free, but not any more. At the time of writing, Square Enix appears to own the rights.

DAVE MIRRA FREESTYLE BMX

Year 2000
Publisher Acclaim
Developer Neon Studios

THE HUGE SUCCESS of the Tony Hawk games led to other publishers signing up their own extreme sports stars in an attempt to replicate it. Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX was one of Acclaim's efforts, and while the consoles got an over-theshoulder perspective much like those games starring Mr Hawk, the Game Boy Color instead got an isometric viewpoint better suited to its performance. The game consists of eight locations, each containing three goals, and you unlock two at a time by completing set numbers of these goals. There are also trick items which can be found in each level: collecting these will add a new trick to your repertoire, enabling you to get higher scores by varying your moves more. ■

FACT

Mirra was tied with Tony Hawk and snowmobiler Joe Parsons as the quickest athletes to get 14 medals at the X Games. All three hit the same number on their eighth appearance.

DAVID BECKHAM SOCCER

Year 2002
Publisher Rage Software
Developer Yoyo Entertainment

RELEASED DURING THE 2001–02 Premier League season while David Beckham was still riding high at the top of his fame, David Beckham Soccer was the name given to a handful of different football games on the PS1, PS2, Xbox, Game Boy Advance and Game Boy Color. This version is obviously the most graphically inferior of the bunch, but by offering arcade-style gameplay similar to that of the Sensible Soccer games that doesn't necessarily mean it's the worst. There are 64 international teams and 138 club teams taking in the English, Scottish, Spanish, French, Italian, German, Swedish and Dutch top-flight leagues. Beckham is the only real player name in the game, however, meaning he plays alongside the likes of Goggs, Cool and Scales instead of Giggs, Cole and Scholes.

FACT

The 2001–02 season was Manchester United's worst in the Premier League at that point, with the team finishing third. At the time of writing, they'd kill for that kind of consistency.

DAVID O'LEARY'S TOTAL SOCCER 2000

Year 2000
Publisher Ubisoft
Developer Exient Entertainment

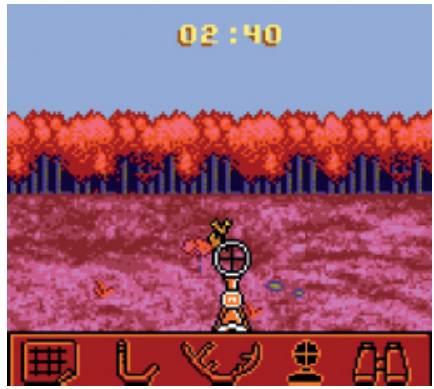
THE THEN-RECENTLY RETIRED David O'Leary may not quite have had the sex appeal of David Beckham, but he was still a big name in the Premier League at the time, managing a Leeds United side that would eventually finish third in the season during which this game was released. This is a Game Boy Color port of the Total Soccer series which was popular among PC players, and is another arcade-like offering, with a fully overhead viewpoint similar to Kick-Off (and similarly over-the-top swerve controls). There are 114 club teams to choose from, consisting of the entire top leagues in England, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Netherlands, as well as Celtic and Rangers from Scotland (because Ubisoft knew not to be silly). ■

FACT

O'Leary was best known as an Arsenal player. He played there for almost his entire career (18 seasons), and won the league twice while he was there.

DEER HUNTER

Year 1999
Publisher Vatical Entertainment
Developer Morning Star Multimedia



YOU MAY BE disappointed to hear that Deer Hunter is not based on the 1978 Vietnam movie starring Robert De Niro and that you therefore cannot play Russian Roulette on your Game Boy Color. Instead, the title is more literal and has you hunting deer in three different locations: the Colorado alpine meadows in the summer, the Arkansas woodlands in the autumn and Indiana in the winter (there's also a target range if you're feeling squeamish). You can hunt with either a rifle, a shotgun or a bow, and you can use tools to help you such as a tree stand (which makes it harder for deer to see you), a cover scent (so they don't smell you) and an attract scent (to make larger deer appear). ■

FACT

The game's box challenges you to 'lock in your sights on the largest rack in the woods', and I can't think of a nice way to finish this sentence so let's just leave it at that.

DEJA VU I & II: THE CASEBOOKS OF ACE HARDING

Year 1999
Publisher Vatical Entertainment
Developer Infinite Ventures

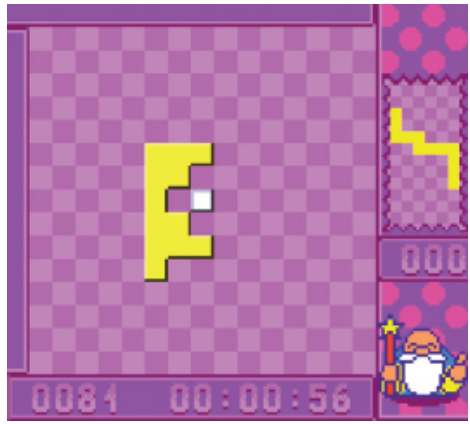
1985 POINT AND click adventure game Deja Vu was ported to the NES in 1990, but its 1988 sequel didn't get the same treatment. This was resolved when the Game Boy Color rolled into town, with ports of both games bundled onto a single cartridge. Playing as Theodore 'Ace' Harding, the first game has you trying to clear your name as you're framed for murder, while the sequel has you in Las Vegas with a mobster's $112,000 debt to pay that isn't yours. Both games use icons that let you perform actions – look, take, open and so on – with the D-Pad controlling a cursor that can be used to interact with objects in the room. ■

FACT

The original Mac version was accompanied by a $5 hint book, which *Macworld* magazine said was 'virtually mandatory' because some of the puzzles were so obtuse.

DENKI BLOCKS

Year 2001 *Publisher* Rage Software *Developer* Denki



DENKI BLOCKS IS a puzzle game that seems simple but is actually deceptively tricky. The player is given a playing area with a number of coloured blocks and obstacles on it. The aim is to match a design that's shown on the screen, which you do by sliding the blocks around. The twist is that if a block is stuck against a wall or another object it won't slide with the others, and when two blocks of the same colour make contact they immediately stick together. This results in an extremely tense puzzler where you have to seriously think about your next steps to avoid pieces joining when you don't want them to. The game received generally positive reviews, but just be careful because it's not easy. ■

FACT

The game is named after Scottish developer Denki, which first developed it for Sky TV's now defunct Gamestar service. Denki went on to make loads of licensed Gamestar titles.

DEXTER'S LABORATORY: ROBOT RAMPAGE

Year 2000
Publisher BAM! Entertainment
Developer

Altron

IT'S NOT HUGELY unfair to suggest that most of the games in this book that are based on children's animated shows may not be of the highest quality. Dexter's Laboratory is easily one of the exceptions to the rule, because it isn't just your run-of-the-mill platformer, it's actually a repurposed North American release of the excellent Elevator Action. While Japanese and European players got Elevator Action (as seen a few pages from now), North American players instead got this reskin in which Dexter has to explore his lab for the codes needed to reprogram his robots, which have been turned against him by his rival Mandark. With 16 stages and lots of gunplay, there's plenty of action to be had here. ■

FACT

A Season 1 episode of *Dexter's Lab* was pulled from circulation and left out of the DVD box set because of a character called the Silver Spooner, who was seen as an offensive gay stereotype.

DINOSAUR

Year 2000 *Publisher* Ubisoft *Developer* Digital Eclipse

THE FIRST OF Disney's in-house animated movies (i.e. not counting Pixar) to be 3D animated, Dinosaur tells the story of an iguanodon called Aladar who's raised by lemurs when his egg is separated from his nest. The game begins at the stage in the movie where a meteor crashes into the Earth, destroying the lemurs' island and forcing Aladar and his friends to head for the mainland. Dinosaur is a sort of puzzle-based adventure game in which you have to guide your team of six characters through 27 stages by using each of their unique abilities in tandem. Aladar can swim and push rocks, for example, while his lemur chum Zini is the only one fast enough to run past some hazards. ■

FACT

Dinosaur has the highest death toll of any Disney animated movie. Not counting all the other dinosaurs on the planet who would die later on, obviously.

DINOSAUR'US

Year	2001
Publisher	Electronic Arts
Developer	RFX Interactive

THIS CURIOUS GAME perhaps deserves more attention than it got, but the fact it never came to North America is probably the reason it's barely mentioned today. It's part Metroidvania and part Pokémon, as you start with an iguanodon (what is it with iguanodons) and eventually befriend other dinosaur species to add to your party. You can then switch between these dinosaurs to make use of their abilities: not only when exploring the platforming sections and using their skills to reach new areas, but also during the turn-based battles that randomly crop up and essentially turn the game into Pokémon for a while. Ultimately, EA dropped Dinosaur'us from North American release: who knows how popular it could have become had it not? ■

FACT

A game with the same name and logo was released on PC shortly before this, but it plays completely differently and is more like Lemmings with baby dinosaurs.

DIVA STARZ: MALL MANIA

Year 2001
Publisher Vivendi Universal Interactive
Developer Digital Eclipse

THIS MINI-GAME COLLECTION is based on the Diva Starz range of talking dolls released by Mattel in 2000. Players choose either Alexa, Nikki, Summer or Tia – don't lie, you know them all well – and have to complete six mini-games to help prepare for a fashion show. First you have to drive your scooter to the mall, then you have to take part in a dance contest, put the right accessories in shopping bags, make a sundae, find your pet in a maze, then choose an outfit your Diva Starz character likes. After the fashion show you have to do it all again with the other characters. The game was criticised for being extremely easy and short: you can clear it with all four characters in less than an hour. ■

FACT

Summer, the environmentalist and animal lover of the group, was dropped in 2002 and replaced with Miranda, a rich girl who wants to be a pop star. Kids, eh?

DOGZ

Year 1999
Publisher Mindscape
Developer Saffire

WHAT DO YOU do if you like the idea of having a virtual pet on your Game Boy Color but you're not a cat person, and therefore don't really like the look of Catz (see a few pages back)? You probably don't need me to finish this line of enquiry. Dogz is basically the same game at Catz, only this time the breeds on offer for adoption are dogs instead. Once you've chosen your canine companion the process is the same, although obviously some of the toys are swapped out (goodbye catnip and ball of yarn, hello bone and throwing stick). As you raise your dog and prove yourself to be a good owner, you'll unlock rarer Dogz, including the ultra-rare green one. ■

FACT

Each copy has one of five different 'special toys', like a flying disc or a chew toy. By connecting with other players you can collect the other toys.

DONALD DUCK: GOIN' QUACKERS

Year 2000 *Publisher* Ubisoft *Developer* Ubisoft Milan

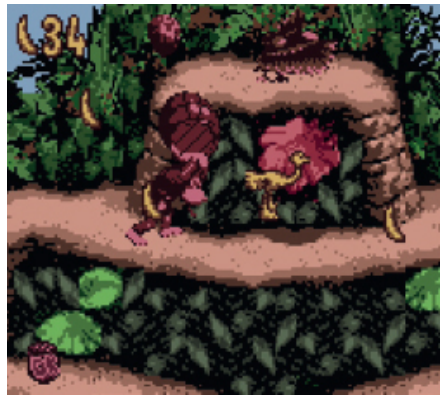
WHILE THE CONSOLE version of Goin' Quackers (or Quack Attack, as it's known in Europe) bears more than a passing resemblance to the first Crash Bandicoot game, this GBC offering is instead a straightforward sidescrolling platformer. Daisy Duck has been kidnapped by Merlock the magician while doing a TV news report on his hidden temple, so Donald heads off to rescue her. The action takes place across four locations – a forest, the streets of Duckburg, Magica de Spell's manor and Merlock's temple – and Donald has to not only clear each stage, but also collect the blueprints for Gyro's teleport machine so you can access the final level and send Merlock away to another dimension. ■

FACT

Donald has a grumpy face on the western box art, but the Japanese version replaces this with new art to make him look all smiley and delighted.

DONKEY KONG COUNTRY

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Nintendo Rare



THE DONKEY KONG Land games on the original Game Boy may have been based on Donkey Kong Country but they offered completely different level designs. This, on the other hand, is more of a straight port of Rare's SNES classic, though it does have some new additions that at least give devotees of the 16-bit version a reason to play through it again. The main adventure has a new stage called Necky Nutmare, and there are also two new minigames which can be played from the main menu: a shooting range called Crosshair Cranky which comes with its own world map and set of stages, and a rather compelling mini-game called Funky Fishing where you have to hook multiple fish while avoiding debris. ■

FACT

The game now has hidden sticker packs which unlock pages in a sticker gallery on the main menu. You can use a Game Boy Printer to print these out as actual stickers.

DOUG'S BIG GAME

Year Publisher Developer

2000 NewKidCo / Ubisoft
Magellan Interactive

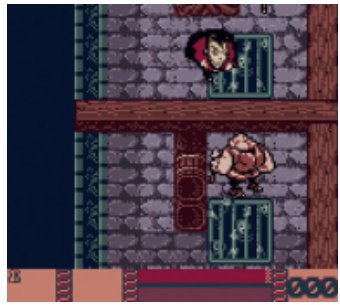
THERE'S A SLIGHT sense of injustice that one of the greatest cartoons ever, *Doug*, only ever got one video game (and that it was based on the inferior later seasons when Disney took over from Nickelodeon). Still, Doug's Big Game is that sole adventure, offering fans of the series a chance to explore Bluffington as Doug and his dog Porkchop search for Doug's friend (and secret crush) Patti after she fails to turn up for a meeting. As you walk around the town you'll talk to other Bluffington residents and perform side-quests for them, and there are also shoot 'em up minigames where you play as Doug's fantasy superhero Quailman. Each playthrough is random, and there are multiple endings depending on where you find Patti.

FACT

In a 2016 interview, *Doug* creator Jim Jinkins says that in his eyes, Doug never did end up with Patti and they went their separate ways after graduating. What does he know, though?

DRACULA: CRAZY VAMPIRE

Year	2001
Publisher	Planet Interactive / Cryo Interactive
Developer	Planet Interactive



THIS ODD ADVENTURE game is an officially licensed Universal Monsters product in which you play as Dracula. After he wakes from a long rest to discover that the Grand Inquisitor and his men are plotting to kill him, Dracula has to travel to 11 countries and free his fellow vampires imprisoned there so they can all join forces to defeat the Inquisitor. The game has a rather cartoonish art style given the subject matter, and there are cameos from other Universal Monsters – Frankenstein's monster, the Mummy, Wolf Man, Swamp Thing and the like – who appear as boss fights. Dracula can also collect vials that act as power-ups: one vial lets him walk in sunlight without dying, for example. ■

FACT

Bela Lugosi played Dracula in the Universal version of the movie. He became so synonymous with the role that when he died he was buried in a Dracula costume, cape and all.

DRAGON BALL Z: LEGENDARY SUPER WARRIORS

Year 2002 *Publisher* Infogrames *Developer* Banpresto

ALTHOUGH NUMEROUS DRAGON Ball console games were released in parts of Europe throughout the 8-bit and 16-bit eras, North America didn't get its first Dragon Ball game until Final Bout on PS1 in 1997. This GBC offering, released a full five years later, was the second. The game's story mode consists of 30 battles, but these take the form of turn-based fights using a card system. There are 125 cards to collect in the game, split into attack, defence and support cards, and players use command cards (which require a button combination) to pull off moves that harm their opponent. The plot covers the anime's first eight seasons, from the start of *Dragon Ball Z* until the end of the *Kid Buu Saga*. ■

FACT

The European version removes any references to dying, replacing them with references to losing. Despite this, it happily uses the words 'damn,' 'hell' and 'bastards'.

DRAGON DANCE

Year 2000
Publisher Crave Entertainment
Developer Natsume

DRAGON DANCE IS another Breakout-style game but it's one that at least brings some new ideas to the table. For starters, your paddle has been replaced with a dragon, and when you change direction it has to curl around (almost like a game of Snake), affecting its length and your ability to hit the ball. The player can also change the speed of the ball (up to ten speed levels) by hitting the Select button, something that obviously makes the game harder but can sometimes be necessary when the occasionally tight timer is running out. Its 100 stages are also sometimes broken up with boss battles, which often see you taking on oversized enemies. It's still a Breakout clone, but one with an imagination. ■

FACT

The Japanese version has the slightly less descriptive title Pocket Color Block, but it does at least have a big happy cartoon dragon on the box, which is nice.

DRAGON TALES: DRAGON ADVENTURES

Year 2001
Publisher NewKidCo
Developer Handheld Games

DRAGON TALES WAS an animated educational children's show produced by the Children's Television Workshop, the same organisation behind *Sesame Street*. This video game adaptation is split into five separate stories, each based on an actual *Dragon Tales* episode, and has players switching between human characters Emmy and Max, and their dragon chums Ord and Cassie. Each story contains numerous tasks, many of which involve collecting a set number of objects. These tasks are given both as text boxes and as speech bubbles showing images and numbers, for children who can't read so well yet. Whether they're trying to collect flutterbies, then, or trying to help a goat find their friend, they'll always know what they have to do. ■

FACT

Dragon Tales started when artist Ron Rodecker, recovering from heart surgery, started sketching dragons to symbolise forces in life that are beyond control. Bit heavy for a kids' show.

DRAGON TALES: DRAGON WINGS

Year	2000
Publisher	NewKidCo / Ubisoft
Developer	Zed Two

BEFORE DRAGON ADVENTURES was this first attempt at a Dragon Tales game, one which focuses more on the dragons themselves. Players can control either Ord or Cassie as they attend the School of the Sky to learn how to be a dragon all over again – having eaten a Forgetful Berry and forgotten how to use their wings – and then go on an adventure involving Emmy and Max. Because the game is aimed at children aged 3–5, the three difficulty settings directly affect how the dragon controls. On the easiest setting the dragon hovers automatically when nothing is pressed, while on the hardest the dragon moves faster but inertia and other factors are added to their movement. ■

FACT

Dragon Wings' first script was written with the mission that education was key. After the writers agreed it was boring, they rewrote it with a new mission: fun is key, and fit in education when you can.

DRAGON WARRIOR I & II

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Enix Tose

WHEN THE FIRST four Dragon Quest games were released on the NES in the west, they were renamed Dragon Warrior. In Japan, the first two games were re-released with enhancements on a single Super Famicom cart: this new 2-in-1 game was then given a Game Boy Color port, which eventually got a western release. Given that it had been nearly 15 years between the first game's original release and its GBC version, there were plenty of improvements: battles ran faster, levelling up was tweaked to make it quicker, monsters dropped more gold and boss fights were made longer and more epic. New story sequences were also added, including a new GBC-only intro in the first game, making this one of the better ways to play the first two Dragon Quests. ■

FACT

The Super Famicom version used the same engine as Dragon Quest V, but obviously this wasn't possible on GBC so it essentially became a demake of a remake.

DRAGON WARRIOR III

Year Publisher Developer 2001 Enix Tose

MUCH LIKE DRAGON Quest I & II before it, this was an enhanced Super Famicom remake of Dragon Quest III, which was then visually downgraded again for the Game Boy Color (with many other improvements left intact). Crucial to the GBC version is the added ability to save your game wherever you want, ideal for when your batteries are running low. The main addition to the GBC port, though, is Monster Medals. These appear at random when defeating a monster, and come in bronze, silver and gold varieties (you need to get a bronze medal for a certain species before it starts dropping silvers, and so on). By collecting the medals for every monster in the game you can unlock new dungeon levels and monsters. ■

FACT

It was found years later that the cart's data contained images of Monster Medals for every monster in Dragon Quest IV, suggesting it was supposed to be included too at one point.

DRAGON WARRIOR MONSTERS

Year 2000 *Publisher* Eidos Interactive *Developer* Tose

WHAT DO YOU do when you own one of the most popular video game series in Japan and you see another one taking off? Enix's answer was to take inspiration from it, which is why it took Dragon Quest and added elements from the new big thing, Pokémon, to make this spin-off series. You play as Terry, who has to become a Monster Master by collecting and raising monsters, in order to find his missing sister. In typical Pokémon fashion, the creatures you collect fight in battles for you and level up independently, with their own strengths and weaknesses. Where it differs is the introduction of a breeding mechanic (which it did before Pokémon), where you can create offspring that have new abilities and improved stats. ■

FACT

If you're wondering why Dragon Quest was initially renamed Dragon Warrior in the west, there was a popular tabletop RPG called DragonQuest and Enix didn't want a lawsuit.

DRAGON WARRIOR MONSTERS II: COBI'S JOURNEY / TARA'S ADVENTURE

Year 2001
Publisher Enix
Developer Tose

ALTHOUGH IT WAS clear that Dragon Warrior Monsters had borrowed some ideas from Pokémon, it didn't copy its most lucrative one. That changed with the sequel, where Enix released two separate versions of the game, each with a number of exclusive monsters (meaning the only way to get them all was to find someone with a copy of the other version and trade with them). As the title suggests, each version also has its own protagonist: Cobi and Tara are a brother and sister who have to explore five realms and find the magical keys in them to get their hands on a giant plug, which will prevent their island from sinking. Well, at least Pokémon didn't have that. ■

FACT

The Slime is the only monster who's appeared in every single Dragon Quest game and its spin-offs. And it's little wonder.

DRAGON'S LAIR

Year 2001
Publisher Capcom
Developer Digital Eclipse

THE ORIGINAL ARCADE version of Dragon's Lair was an FMV game that used a Laserdisc player to let players control an animated movie. When bringing the game to consoles (and the original Game Boy), developers wisely chose not to attempt to replicate it, and instead went down the platformer route. Fair play, then, to Digital Eclipse, which somehow managed to do the impossible and recreate the arcade version of Dragon's Lair on the Game Boy Color. Naturally, the video quality suffers quite a bit and the reality is that the arcade original had very limited gameplay anyway so it's not the most enjoyable experience by any stretch of the imagination, but as a technical achievement it's among the most impressive on the handheld. ■

FACT

The Game Boy Color cartridge containing Dragon's Lair is a mere 8 MB in size. The fact there's around 20 minutes of video makes it all the more impressive.

DRIVER

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Infogrames Crawfish Interactive

LIKE MANY OTHER games in this section, Driver started life as a polygonal console game with a third-person ‘chase’ viewpoint and was then turned into something completely different for the Game Boy Color port. Playing as the series’ undercover cop hero Tanner, you have to act as a getaway driver for a bunch of criminals over the course of 15 missions spread out over Miami, Los Angeles and New York. Because the cops aren’t in on it you’ll often find yourself trying to outrun your own colleagues, making for some entertaining movie-style police chases. the GBC version goes for a top-down viewpoint, which makes the game look a lot more like Grand Theft Auto than the original PS1 version of Driver. ■

FACT

San Francisco is also in the console versions but was dropped for the GBC. the PC version also includes a bonus fifth city, Newcastle (where developer Reflections is based).

DROPZONE

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Acclaim Awesome Developments

ARCHER MACLEAN'S CLONE of Defender had already seen a release on the original Game Boy (as seen in the previous section), but a game set in space loses some of its atmosphere when it's forced to use a light background to avoid ghosting. As well as the obvious addition of colour this Game Boy Color version lets players choose between a light or dark background, meaning you have a more authentic outer space experience. The gameplay is more or less identical to the Game Boy version, but rather than a simple recolour the game's UI and sprites have been slightly tweaked to make the game look a little better on the GBC. The result is still an entertaining Defender imitation, regardless of version. ■

FACT

Maclean came up with the game's name when he was skydiving. The skydiving company was called Dropzone Industries, and he thought 'that could work'.

DUKE NUKEM

Year	1999
Publisher	GT Interactive
Developer	Torus Games

YOU'LL NOTE THAT this GBC Duke Nukem game doesn't have '3D' at the end of the title like most ports of 3D Realms' iconic firstperson shooter. That's because it was wisely decided that Nintendo's handheld probably couldn't handle an FPS and so a completely different game based on Apogee Software's earlier Duke Nukem series was created instead. It's technically a heavily modified version of 1993 PC platformer Duke Nukem II, with the level and creature designs completely overhauled. The story goes that the Zorgonites have abducted Duke while he was giving an interview on TV, and want to take out his brain and put it in a war machine to take over Earth. Understandably not up for this, Duke heads out guns-ablazing. ■

FACT

Duke understandably doesn't have his potty mouth in this game, instead uttering less memorable lines like 'time to give these aliens a taste of fighting spirit'.

THE DUKES OF HAZZARD: RACING FOR HOME

Year Publisher Developer 2000 SouthPeak Interactive /

Ubisoft Spellbound Entertainment

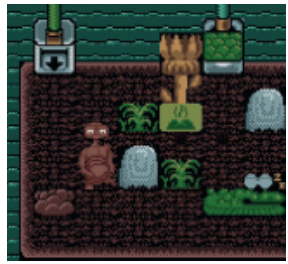
BETWEEN 1979 AND 1985 there were fewer TV series more well-loved than *The Dukes of Hazzard*. This Game Boy Color adaptation has you playing as Bo and Luke Duke as they continue to foil the plans of Boss Hogg and Sheriff Rosco P. Coltrane as only they know how: by driving their car really fast and stuff. The game is played from an isometric viewpoint and has 27 missions in which you'll be doing the likes of winning races, delivering moonshine, outrunning the cops and (of course) doing big jumps. Although you'll be driving the iconic General Lee for most of the game, some missions require you to use Daisy's Jeep or Cooter's tow truck. Yee, and indeed Haw.

FACT

A spin-off TV series called *Enos*, based on one of the young deputy sheriffs from the show, started in 1980 and lasted just one season before it was binned.

E.T. THE EXTRATERRESTRIAL AND THE COSMIC GARDEN

Year Publisher Developer 2002 NewKidCo Zed Two



REMEMBER THE BIT in Steven Spielberg's iconic '80s blockbuster where E.T. teams up with a giant slug and a bumblebee to create the best garden imaginable? No? Hmm, you must have been at the toilet during that bit. It definitely must have happened, because how else would you explain this GBC game, in which you have to collect 63 different plants from every planet in the galaxy, feed and water them properly, and feed weeds to the ever-hungry Space Slug, who then poos out compost you can use to help grow your plants? And don't forget the bit with the complicated plant breeding system, where each plant has character traits and you have to use a Space Bee to cross-pollinate them. ■

FACT

The game (along with the others listed below) was created to tie in with the 20th anniversary of *E.T.*, even though some at NewKidCo were wary about the legacy of the awful Atari 2600 E.T. game.

E.T. THE EXTRATERRESTRIAL: DIGITAL COMPANION

Year 2001
Publisher NewKidCo
Developer Powerhead Games

ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO turn the Game Boy into a personal organiser, the E.T. Digital Companion opens by asking the player an unnecessarily long list of questions (including such nonpersonal organiser prompts like your father's name, your least favourite food and what you'd like to be when you grow up) then presents them with a fake email folder, a memo pad and an address book. Since this is clearly impractical for regular use, the cartridge also includes some basic E.T. games, just so there's at least some value here: these include a sliding puzzle (because of course), an E.T. quiz, a bicycle racing mini-game and a big long virtual pet called a Flopglopple, which eats eggs in a really disturbing manner. ■

FACT

Flopglopples also feature in the E.T. sequel novel *The Book of the Green Planet*, which follows E.T. as he leaves Earth and travels back home.

E.T. THE EXTRATERRESTRIAL: ESCAPE FROM PLANET EARTH

Year	2001
Publisher	NewKidCo / Ubisoft
Developer	Saffire

E.T. HAS WELL and truly had it with Earth, so he's decided it's finally time to ditch us pesky meatbags and head back to his home planet. Controlling E.T. and Elliott, the aim is to explore the town, collecting enough bottle caps and other items to trade in for phone parts so E.T. can phone home. Each bottle cap is located in a separate puzzle, where E.T. has to avoid hazards and reach the end in order to collect the cap. The overworld exploration also includes its own puzzles, with E.T. and Elliott able to split up and work together to get past various obstacles. Of all the E.T. games released over the years, this is arguably one of the better ones. ■

FACT

When I say 'all the E.T. games', I mean it: around 15 different E.T. games have been released over the years, not counting his appearance in the excellent Lego Dimensions.

EARTHWORM JIM 2: MENACE 2 THE GALAXY

Year 1999
Publisher Crave Entertainment
Developer David A Palmer Productions

RATHER THAN A port of the console versions of Earthworm Jim 2, this is a completely original platformer exclusive to the Game Boy Color and technically counts as the fourth game in the series (after Earthworm Jim 3D). The story goes that Jim's doppelganger Evil Jim has an interdimensional transporter and is using it to wreak havoc across the galaxy, so Jim uses his own interdimensional transporter to chase him down. Because the gizmo requires a lot of energy, Jim has to collect a certain number of power cells in each stage before he can blast to the next dimension. This leads to the aspect of the game that was most criticised: while the game plays well enough, the heavy emphasis on collecting was considered repetitive. ■

FACT

Although the game works on both the Game Boy and Game Boy Color, you can only reach the final post-credits stage, Happiness, by playing on the GBC.

ECW HARDCORE REVOLUTION

Year 2000
Publisher Acclaim
Developer Crawfish Interactive

AFTER ACCLAIM LOST the WWF licence to THQ, it had to fill that grappling gap with something else. With rival WCW licensed to EA, Acclaim opted for the plucky upstart Extreme Championship Wrestling (ECW). As well as a couple of (poorly received) console games, it also released this Game Boy Color offering, which contains a roster of 10 wrestlers: Mike Awesome, Ballz Mahoney, Justin Credible, Tommy Dreamer, Jerry Lynn, Raven, Sabu, Lance Storm, Yoshihiro Tajiri and Rob Van Dam. Given that ECW is a 'hardcore' promotion – it's in the title, after all – weapons can be freely used (although there are still count-outs, oddly, so some rules still apply). You can even take part in a Barbed Wire Match, where the ring ropes are replaced with the jaggy stuff. ■

FACT

ECW folded in 2001. In 2003, the assets were bought by WWE, who revived the name in 2005 and ran it as a third brand alongside Raw and Smackdown until 2010.

ELEVATOR ACTION

Year 2000 *Publisher* TDK Mediactive *Developer* Altron

KNOWN IN JAPAN as Elevator Action EX (and still sporting that name on the title screen), this is a remake of the 1983 arcade game Elevator Action, which itself was ported earlier to the original Game Boy. Although the general concept is the same – make your way down a multistorey building full of criminals, using its elevators and checking its doors for secret files – the game has a number of improvements, including the ability to choose between three different characters, a bunch of extra stages and a final boss fight. If you're wondering why the game was never released in North America, it was: you already read about it a few pages back. The Dexter's Lab game is a reskinned version of it. ■

FACT

Once you beat the game you unlock the ability to play through it as the boss, with the game's main protagonist Mike as the final boss instead.

THE EMPEROR'S NEW GROOVE

Year 2000
Publisher Ubisoft
Developer Sandbox Interactive

BASED ON THE Disney animated movie of the same name, this platformer has you playing as the titular emperor, Kuzco, as he tries to make his way back to his palace to defeat his advisor Yzma, who's turned him into a llama. The llamafied Kuzco can defeat enemies by headbutting them, charging into them or (being a llama) spitting at them. His journey takes him through six main locations: the village, the jungle, the cliffs, the city, the secret lab and the emperor's palace – before the final confrontation with Yzma. Kuzco only has a finite amount of spit, so once his mouth is dry he has to refill it by collecting 'spit drops'. I hope you don't read this book while eating your dinner. ■

FACT

The movie wasn't a huge success. It entered the US box office at number four, behind *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, *Dude, Where's My Car?* and *What Women Want*.

ESPN INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Konami Konami

SOME 17 YEARS after the original Track & Field hit arcades, Konami was still releasing new entries in this series. This Game Boy Color offering – complete with ESPN branding this time – contains 12 events, some of which have to be unlocked. You start off with the 100m Dash, Long Jump, Fencing, Javelin, 100m Freestyle Swimming and Weightlifting, and getting gold on all of these unlocks the High Jump, 110m Hurdles, Pole Vault and Vault. Finally, get gold on all of these and you'll unlock the final two events, Trap Shooting and Table Tennis. While many of the events have you building speed or power by bashing the A and B buttons, it's not the case across the board. ■

FACT

The Japanese version of the game has official Olympics branding and is instead called Ganbare! Nippon! Olympic 2000.

ESPN NATIONAL HOCKEY NIGHT

Year 2001
Publisher Konami
Developer Konami

THIS ISN'T TO be confused with the 1994 ESPN National Hockey Night game on SNES, Genesis and Sega DC, though you may as well confuse it because it's the same sort of thing. It's about as by-the-books as you'd expect a sports game from that era to be, sporting both the NHL and NHLPA licences and therefore boasting the real team names and logos as well as all the real player names. As well as Exhibition mode there's a Season mode where you can play a 10-game, 20- game, 40-game or full 82-game season. There's also a Playoffs mode if you want to skip to the final tournament. The game is played from a directly overhead perspective, angled higher than EA's NHL games. ■

FACT

The ESPN National Hockey Night branding lasted on ESPN from 1992 to 2004. After a labour lockout cancelled the 2004–05 season, ESPN decided not to renew its NHL rights and Comcast took over.

EVEL KNIEVEL

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Rockstar Games / Take Two Tarantula Studios

LEGENDARY DAREDEVIL EVEL Knievel spent his life jumping over things on his motorbike, so it would be a little odd if this Game Boy Color game was about stamp collecting instead. You can breathe a sigh of relief, then: bike jumps it is. The game consists of 25 stages split across five iconic locations from Knievel's career: Las Vegas, LA, London, San Francisco and Snake River Canyon. Each stage is similar to the Trials games (or Elasto Mania on the PC) in that it's a platformer with extremely sensitive handling in which you lean forward and back to keep balance while jumping off ramps and the like. Each location ends with a Grand Finale where you buy a bunch of objects to do a massive jump over. ■

FACT

Objects you can choose to jump over in the Grand Finales range from portable toilets, limos and off-road trucks to Vegas showgirls and, um, a 'herd of rednecks'.

EXTREME GHOSTBUSTERS

Year 2001
Publisher Light and Shadow
Developer Production Magic Pockets

EXTREME GHOSTBUSTERS WAS a short-lived animated spin-off starring a new group of diverse Ghostbusters mentored by one of the movie's main protagonists, Egon Spengler. The game lets you play as Eduardo, Roland, Garrett or Kylie as they bust healthy quantities of ghosts. Each of the game's 20 missions is introduced by either Janine or Egon, who tell you where you're headed and what you have to do when you get there (take a guess). The gameplay takes the form of an action platformer, where you can stop and use your proton pack to zap any ghosts you encounter. By holding down the action button, you can rotate left and right to aim your stream in an arc. ■

FACT

The game's ghosts and the hero's proton blaster both flicker on and off for alternate frames, so in the screenshot the hero is actually firing at the ghost but you can't tell.

EXTREME SPORTS WITH THE BERENSTAIN BEARS

Year 2000 *Publisher* Sound Source Interactive *Developer*

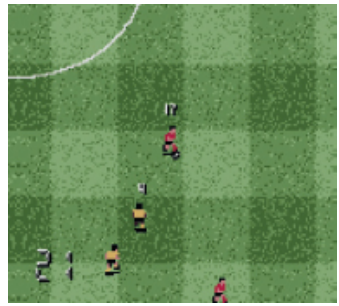
WHEN YOU THINK of extreme sports, it's probably fair to say the likes of Tony Hawk and Mat Hoffman spring to mind before Brother Bear and Sister Bear come into your head. And yet, the two siblings from the popular Berenstain Bears series of children's books did indeed star in an extreme sports game on the Game Boy Color in a title about as unlikely as PETA Deer Hunting. There are six extreme pastimes to partake in here: toboggan, sled, raft, kayak, bike and dirt board. All six are played from the same overhead perspective, as you travel upwards avoiding obstacles and hitting jumps (because you oddly have better control in the air than on the ground). ■

FACT

EGM magazine ranked the game number 20 in its worst video games of all time, which is rather harsh. It's probably not even one of the worst Game Boy games, in reality.

THE FA PREMIER LEAGUE STARS 2001

Year Publisher Developer 2001 THQ Krisalis Software



THE FIRST FA Premier League Stars game was released on the PlayStation in 1999 and was a spin-off of the FIFA series focusing mainly on England's top-flight league. It was succeeded by a 2001 edition, which then got a Game Boy Color port. This handheld version was handled by Krisalis – which had handled numerous computer and console football games in the '90s – and it plays very much like one of its past offerings, with solid enough gameplay. The game's title sums up the main criticism levelled at it, however: because it's based solely on the Premier League, there are only 20 teams to choose from, making it a harder sell when you've got FIFA sitting there on the shelves too. ■

FACT

Previous Krisalis football games included Manchester United Europe, John Barnes European Football and European Club Soccer. They wouldn't have voted Brexit, basically.

F1 CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON 2000

Year 2000
Publisher EA Sports
Developer Tiertex

ANOTHER EA SPORTS game given the Game Boy Color treatment, it doesn't take Columbo to figure out that this one is based on the 2000 Formula One racing season. All the official racers and teams are in the game, from Michael Schumacher to Pedro de la Rosa, and the game's Championship mode lets you race through the same 17-event schedule from the actual season. To developer Tiertex's credit, the game doesn't opt for the standard top-down or sprite-based 'chase' view most Game Boy Color racing games have, and instead attempts some basic 3D-like tracks. The result is visually impressive, and while there's a clear hit to the frame rate as a result, it certainly sets it apart from most other racing games on the handheld. ■

FACT

Michael Schumacher won the 2000 season, beating Mika Häkkinen by 19 points. It was also Ferrari's first Driver's Champion since South African Jody Scheckter won it in 1979.

F1 RACING CHAMPIONSHIP

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Video System Ubisoft

OPENING WITH A brief but impressive FMV sequence for the Game Boy Color, F1 Racing Championship's statement of intent to deliver a quality racing game is clear from the beginning. The game is based on the 1999 F1 Season, featuring all the official teams and drivers. While it doesn't boast 3D visuals like EA's game would the following year, it does still deliver fast-paced gameplay and, somewhat unusually for the handheld, lets players choose between behindthe- car and inside-the-car camera angles. It also includes a Mission Mode, where you have to complete scenarios for all 16 tracks in the game. In Italy, for example, you play as Alessandro Zanardi and have to hold off Ralf Schumacher, not letting him overtake you for a number of laps. ■

FACT

One of the tracks is called Europe, despite being in Germany. Every F1 season from 1993 to 2012 had a European Grand Prix, which was a race in a country that already had a GP.

F1 WORLD GRAND PRIX

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Video System Video System

THE NINTENDO 64 versions of the F1 World Grand Prix games were highly praised for being the most realistic depictions of the sport at that time. While the Game Boy Color version could obviously never hope to live up to the same standards, it can at least boast to be one of the smoothest racing games on the handheld, with extremely fast action running at a solid 60 frames per second. The game is based on the 1998 F1 season and includes most of the real racers with the exception of Jacques Villeneuve (who's simply called Williams Driver). Much like F1 Racing Championship, it too has a Challenge Mode where you take on scenarios based on actual events from that season. ■

FACT

Oddly, in Japan the GBC version of F1 World Grand Prix was released seven months after the GBC version of F1 World Grand Prix II.

F1 WORLD GRAND PRIX II

Year 2000
Publisher Konami
Developer

ITL RATHER THAN SIMPLY churning out the same thing again, the second F1 World Grand Prix game on GBC overhauls the gameplay, meaning it at least plays differently to its predecessor. This time it's based on the 1999 season, with all the real drivers and teams in there as usual: even Jacques Villeneuve makes an appearance this time. The Challenge mode also returns with a fresh set of scenarios to attempt. As in the previous game you also get to tweak numerous aspects of your car, from its tyres and gear ratio to its wing angle and the amount of fuel you want to start with. While it looks and feels slightly different on the track, in terms of modes and features it's similar. ■

FACT

Jacques Villeneuve might as well not have bothered being in the game anyway. Joining the BAR team for the 1999 season, he retired from 12 of the 16 races and ended up with no points.

F-18 THUNDER STRIKE

Year 2000
Publisher Majesco / Take-Two
Developer Morning Star Multimedia

THIS DOGFIGHTING GAME is very similar to Turn and Burn on the original Game Boy. Hostile activity has been reported in the Balkans, so as a fighter pilot for the US Air Force you have to take on a series of aerial missions. The game puts you behind the cockpit of an F-18 Hornet and is played from a first-person perspective. One of the major criticisms of Turn and Burn was that it could take an age to find an enemy due to the need to select them on a radar then travel to them while they continued moving. This is resolved here with a choice between Simulation mode (which is the same) or Arcade mode (which makes it easier to track down enemies). ■

FACT

I'm reliably informed by this book's editor that the F-18 is a US Navy aircraft, and as such US Air Force fighter pilots would never have actually used it.

FIFA 2000

Year 1999
Publisher THQ / EA Sports
Developer Tiertex

THE SOLE MAIN entry in the FIFA series for the Game Boy Color is similar to the ‘97 and ‘98 editions on the original Game Boy, particularly the latter (since its game engine is practically identical). Whereas the console versions feature a slew of official club teams, FIFA 2000 on GBC only offers 64 national teams (if you count the THQ Tornadoes as one, which you shouldn’t but I am). As was seemingly the law in handheld FIFA games, all the player names continue to be completely fictional, meaning you’ve got the likes of D. Lawson and G. Sykes playing up front for England. It does at least add an indoor mode, similar to the one featured in the final few 16-bit versions of FIFA. ■

FACT

Handheld FIFA took a break for a couple of years before returning in FIFA 2003 for the Game Boy Advance, which finally reinstated club teams and added real player names.

THE FISH FILES

Year Publisher Developer 2001 Microids 7th Sense

THERE WEREN'T MANY point-and-click adventures games on the Game Boy Advance (or on handhelds or consoles in general, really), but Italian developer 7th Sense decided to have a crack at it. The Fish Files tells the story of Dante, whose fish Ramada has disappeared (at the start we see that it may have been abducted by aliens, so the title is an X-Files reference). Dante goes off in search of Ramada on an adventure involving all manner of weird and wonderful characters. The game is clearly based on the LucasArts point-andclick games, but makes use of the Game Boy Color's limitations by making the player control Dante directly and walk him to the items they want him to interact with, rather than using a pointer. ■

FACT

The game's programmer Vincenzo Alagna was still in high school when he started coding it. After he graduated he tried securing a publisher, which he managed by Christmas.

FISHER PRICE RESCUE HEROES: FIRE FRENZY

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Mattel Interactive Engine Software

IT'S A HARD life being a firefighter, even if you're a little plastic one. Based on the Rescue Heroes action figure line and cartoon aimed at young children, Fire Frenzy consists of six mini-games. There's a matching game where you spray water on smoking bushes to find matching animals (because apparently they can't be rescued unless they have a partner), a game where you dig a firebreak, one where you evacuate people on your motorbike, one where you transport stranded people across a river on a boat, and one where you drop water on a forest fire with a helicopter. Beat all these to unlock the sixth game, a Simon-style sound-matching game where you alert park visitors of a fire. ■

FACT

The cartoon was designed to teach children how to deal with emergency situations, and contained the catchphrase: 'Think like a Rescue Hero, think safe.'

FIX & FOXI EPISODE 1: LUPO

Year	2000
Publisher	Ravensburger Interactive
Developer	Similis

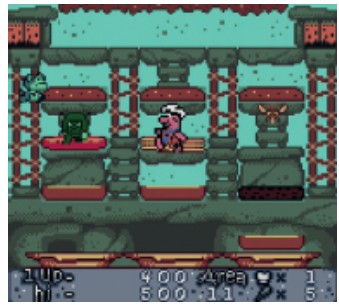
THIS PLATFORMER IS based on the German comic magazine *Fix und Foxi*, and its subsequent 2000 cartoon series *Fix & Foxi and Friends*. Rather than focusing on the series' main characters (a pair of fox twins), the game instead stars their friend Lupo, who usually lives in a tower. The game opens with Lupo being kicked out of his tower after losing his ownership certificate, and if he can't find it the tower will be demolished to make way for a shopping mall. His journey to find it back takes him to the countryside, a pirate ship, a jungle with ancient ruins, an underground mine, a haunted castle and – just to complete the platformer trope Bingo card – a spaceship. ■

FACT

The *Fix und Foxi* magazine ran weekly from 1953 until 1994. Attempts were made in 2000, 2005 and 2010 to relaunch it as a monthly mag, but at the time of writing it seems gone for good.

THE FLINTSTONES: BURGERTIME IN BEDROCK

Year 2001
Publisher Classified Games
Developer Conspiracy Entertainment



YOU AREN'T GOING to believe this, but Fred Flintstone no longer has to work at the gravel pit. His boss Mr Slate has bought a Brontoburger restaurant and wants Fred to work there for him. Fred's new job (or Barney, if you'd rather play as him) is to assemble enormous dinosaur-sized burgers by walking over the ingredients, dropping them down the stage until they stack up at the bottom. He has to avoid a bunch of prehistoric pests while doing this, but he does have a limited number of club whacks he can dish out to stop them. If this sounds a lot like Data East's 1982 arcade game BurgerTime, that's because that's exactly what it is. ■

FACT

Classified Games was a publishing label for Conspiracy Entertainment, which used it for two games (this and Microsoft Puzzle Collection) before ditching it and using the Conspiracy name instead.

FLIPPER AND LOPAKA

Year 2001
Publisher Ubisoft
Developer Planet Interactive

SINCE THE 1960S, the adventures of bottlenose dolphin Flipper have been portrayed in numerous movies and TV series. *Flipper and Lopaka* was an Australian attempt to turn it into a cartoon, which also involved giving Flipper a voice (pure witchcraft, if you ask me) and teaming him up with an 11-year-old Polynesian boy called Lopaka. In the GBC adaptation, the eight sacred crystals that protect the underwater city of Quetzo have disappeared, so Flipper and Lopaka have to get them back. The game alternates between platforming sections in which Lopaka has to find a crystal, and underwater sections (similar to Ecco the Dolphin) where Flipper takes the crystal back to the altar where it originally sat. ■

FACT

The game's box says that 'for the first time, two characters are playable', a claim that's such a stretch you could lie on it like a hammock.

FORCE 21

Year Publisher Developer

2000 Red Storm Entertainment The Code Monkeys

DON'T WORRY, YOU haven't missed out on the previous 20 games in the Force series. This strategy game is set in the future – the year 2015 to be precise – where you've been deployed to the Sino-Kazakh border as World War III kicks off. China has become one of the world's leading capitalist powers, but it's running out of resources, so starts to invade Kazakhstan to steal its raw materials, which in turn prompts the US military to head over to assist the Kazakh forces. After choosing whether to play as the US or China, you have to take on a series of missions where you explore the land, taking out any enemies you encounter. You have numerous unit types, ranging from tanks to helicopters. ■

FACT

Publisher Red Storm specialised in combat games like this: it was founded by author Tom Clancy, who lent his name to Rainbow Six, Ghost Recon, Splinter Cell and the like.

FORMULA ONE 2000

Year 2000
Publisher Take Two Interactive
Developer Tarantula Studios

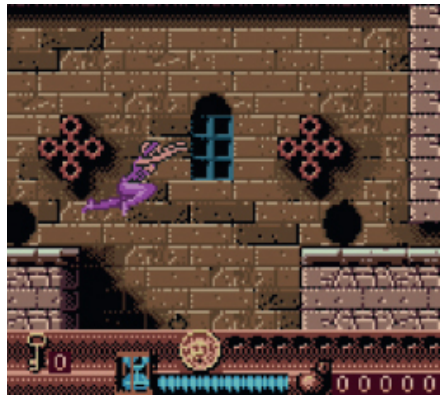
IN CASE THE four F1 games on the previous pages weren't enough, here's further proof that the FIA used to love throwing its licence around like confetti at a wedding. This one is a handheld version of Psygnosis' popular Formula One series on the PlayStation, and is based on the 2000 F1 Season with all the correct drivers and teams present and accounted for. The game runs at a noticeably lower frame rate than some other F1 offerings from other developers, and some odd design choices – cars are really wide so overtaking is difficult, and transmission is set to manual by default and can only be changed in a small option on the driver select screen – mean it failed to stand out on the grid. ■

FACT

Unlike other F1 games on the GBC, this has a section aimed at newcomers to the sport, which details its history and explains the various rules (most of which aren't in the game).

FORT BOYARD

Year 2001
Publisher Microids
Developer Microids



THE HUGELY POPULAR French game show which spawned over 1,800 episodes across its numerous incarnations around the world, *Fort Boyard*'s concept was ripe for a video game adaptation. Players control a team of four contestants – choosing one at a time for each task – and have to take on a series of challenges, which are essentially just platforming stages, in which you have to find a hidden key. Once you collect enough keys you get to take part in the final stage, where you have to collect as many coins as you can while avoiding the real tigers roaming around. The concept may be sound, but the Fort Boyard game suffers from exceptionally inaccurate controls. ■

FACT

In the late '80s a UK version of *Fort Boyard* was commissioned, but the fortress was unavailable so it was scrapped and *The Crystal Maze* was created instead. the UK did get its own *Fort Boyard* in 1998.

FROGGER

Year 1998
Publisher Majesco
Developer Morning Star Multimedia

A NUMBER OF the Game Boy Color titles that have been ported over from the original Game Boy are more than straight colourisations, with developers using the opportunity to redraw some sprites and improve some little things here or there. The Game Boy Color version of Frogger is very much a game that does not do this, instead offering a practically identical version of the Game Boy version with the benefit of added colour and not much else beyond a slightly tweaked credits screen and new developer logos at the start. Naturally, this does at least mean this is one of those GBC carts which work on the Game Boy too, meaning if you have the choice this is still the version to get. ■

FACT

The game's theme is a Japanese children's song called 'Inu no Omawarisan', which is about a stray cat who's crying because she can't find her home, while a dog police officer doesn't know what to do.

FROGGER 2

Year 2000
Publisher Hasbro Interactive
Developer Game Titan

ALTHOUGH THIS WAS released alongside Frogger 2: Swampy's Revenge on the PS1, Dreamcast and Windows, and even shared the same cover art, this is a completely different game. Rather than simply crossing a road to reach lily pads, then, this time you're exploring five different locations across 35 stages with Frogger and a new female frog called Lillie Frog as they try to rescue their missing baby frogs. Starting off at the Frog Pond, then, things initially feel familiar with road-crossing antics (albeit with new hazards like bulldozers and oil slicks), but then you end up in the Gator King's underground lair, an ice cave, a lava pit and the Lost Mines, lending plenty of variety to proceedings. ■

FACT

The manual claims Lillie Frog is Frogger's 'friend', but then refers to 'their lost baby frogs'. You can't fool us Konami, we know what they're up to.

FULL TIME SOCCER

Year 2001 *Publisher* Rocket Games *Developer* DAG

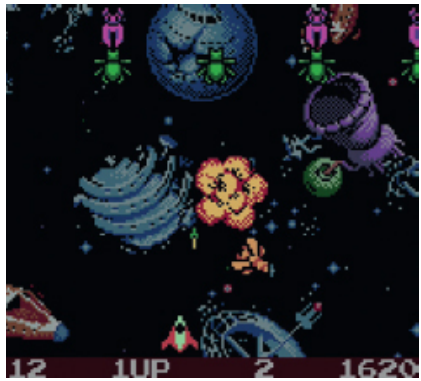
THIS UNLICENSED FOOTBALL game is arguably better than a number of the legit offerings on the Game Boy Color. There are 20 club teams and 20 national teams to choose from, though the club teams are nothing like any real-life teams and are simply the names of cities: Glasgow, Berlin, Luton, Edinburgh and the like. The gameplay is a clear imitation of Sensible Soccer: other titles on the GBC also attempted this but few came as close as this one does. Players can customise their own cup or league, with an impressive number of options including how many points you get for a win. You can also change the pitch type, ranging from pristine grass to muddy or icy conditions. ■

FACT

Although Glasgow's two biggest teams, Celtic and Rangers, wear green and blue respectively, the game plays it safe by making Glasgow wear red. Good news, Partick Thistle fans.

GALAGA: DESTINATION EARTH

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Hasbro Interactive Pipe Dream Interactive



THIS REIMAGINING OF Namco's seminal arcade shoot 'em up Galaga adds a new plot and some new features, not least of which is a series of backgrounds that replace the simple starfield of the arcade original, making the game more visually diverse. The hostile alien species known as the Galaga have recuperated after their defeat in the first game, and are now headed to Earth to take over. You have to head out and engage them as they approach, taking them on at the edge of the solar system, over Saturn, above an alien planetoid and finally on the Moon. Each stage contains four waves of Galaga, which have to all be defeated before you can move on. ■

FACT

The game is set in 2181, 'two hundred years since the Galaga invasion', which means the original 1981 game was set in the present day and therefore definitely happened in real life.

GAME & WATCH GALLERY 2

Year 1998
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Tose

MUCH LIKE THE previous Game & Watch Gallery on the original Game Boy, this is a collection of games that were originally released as part of Nintendo's Game & Watch series of LCD handhelds. There are five games here – Parachute, Helmet, Chef, Vermin and Donkey Kong – and you can also unlock a sixth one, Ball. As before, each game comes in a Classic mode which replicates the original version with all its bleeps and bloops, as well as a Modern mode which adds Mario characters, includes proper music and generally makes each game feel a lot more up to date. As you pass certain score milestones you'll earn Stars which unlock new features in the game's Museum mode, such as animations showing other G&W games. ■

FACT

Ball was the first ever Game & Watch, released in April 1980. Nintendo released a replica in April 2010 to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the series.

GAME & WATCH GALLERY 3

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Nintendo Tose

IT'S MORE OF the same with this next compilation of Game & Watch games, with a new selection of five games – Egg, Greenhouse, Turtle Bridge, Mario Bros and Donkey Kong Jr – playable in both Classic and Modern modes. This time collecting Stars will not only unlock an extra hard mode for each game called Star mode, it'll also unlock a further five games: Flagman, Judge, Lion, Spitball Sparky and Donkey Kong II. These bonus games, however, are only playable in Classic mode, so if you were expecting a remake of Spitball Sparky with Yoshi spitting at blocks, your very niche desire will go unfulfilled. As before, animations of other Game & Watch games can also be unlocked in the Museum mode. ■

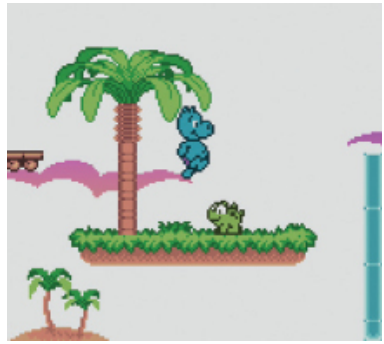
FACT

The original G&W Fire was supposed to have the building on the right of the screen but an error with the LCD production flipped the image. The 'correct' version is an extra unlockable here.

DAS GEHEIMNIS DER HAPPY HIPPO-INSEL

Year Publisher Developer 2001 JoWooD Productions

Kritzelkratz 3000



AS WHAT HAS to be one of the most oddly niche licensed games ever made, this German platformer – whose title translates to The Secret of Happy Hippo Island – is based on the Happy Hippo biscuits made by chocolate company Kinder. You play as Max Mutig, a (happy) hippo who lives on a beach. Max's happiness takes a knock when a distant volcano starts erupting, firing molten rocks into the sky. Max heads out to see if he can stop a complete disaster on a quest that takes him through six locations, ending at the volcano itself. The game's main mechanic is Max's ability to collect water, which he can then spit at fire to put it out. The game is short and simple but harmless enough. ■

FACT

An extremely rare yellow Kinder Happy Hippo version of the Game Boy Color was given away in a German competition, in which 111 of the consoles were given away.

GEX: ENTER THE GECKO

Year 1998
Publisher Crave / Interplay
Developer David A Palmer Productions

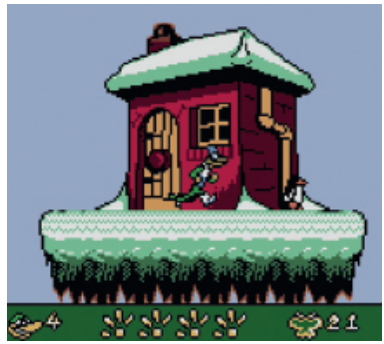
THIS IS A handheld version of the second game in the Gex series, ditching the console versions' 3D platforming for a more GBC-friendly 2D side-scrolling affair. After saving the day in the first game, Gex is trying to live a life of solitude, but this all changes when the government asks him to once again defeat Rez, the enemy from the first game. Rez is trying to take over the world's TV channels, so Gex has to enter a TV universe and visit numerous channels – a cartoon station, a horror channel, a channel dedicated to kung fu movies, and so on – performing a few different missions in each to clear them of Rez's influence. ■

FACT

The stage names are all puns, ranging from the weak (Poltergex, Honey I Shrunk the Gecko) to rather strong (Frankensteinfeld, Samurai Night Fever, Texas Chainsaw Manicure).

GEX 3: DEEP POCKET GECKO

Year 1999
Publisher Eidos Interactive
Developer David A. Palmer Productions



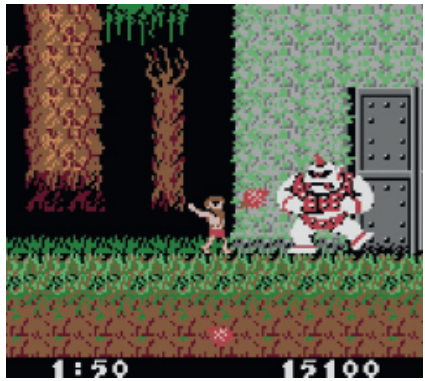
THE GBC VERSION of Gex 3 is the same sort of thing as its predecessor, though at least this time it doesn't have exactly the same name as the console versions (Deep Cover Gecko). Rez is back again and this time he's kidnapped Gex's partner Agent Xtra, so Gex has to once again enter the world of terrible TV movies to rescue her. This time the stages include channels based on Christmas movies, detective stories, Egypt documentaries, westerns, anime and superhero movies. The boss fights come from separate channels too, the most notable being Rock Hard, a professional wrestler who's based on The Rock and Stone Cold Steve Austin. It's less packed than the console versions, though, leaving out five channels altogether. ■

FACT

The European version of the game tweaks the title screen slightly, so that Gex's human partner Agent Xtra has a slimmer waist.

GHOSTS 'N GOBLINS

Year 2000 *Publisher* Capcom *Developer* Digital Eclipse



ALTHOUGH IT CLEARLY takes inspiration from the NES version, this Game Boy Color port of Ghosts ‘n Goblins isn’t a direct lift as many of its sprites have been recoloured or redrawn entirely. The plot naturally remains the same: you play as Sir Arthur, who has to rescue Princess Prin-Prin from Hades. The game is notorious for being extremely difficult: not only are the enemies often fast and tricky to kill, and not only are two hits are all that’s needed to kill you, but you also have to complete the game twice in a row because the first time was a dream. The Game Boy version makes things a little more tolerable by adding a password system, but it’s still no walk in the park. ■

FACT

The NES version’s badly written ‘congraturation, this story is happy end’ ending message has sadly been replaced with ‘congratulations, you have restored peace to the kingdom’.

GIFT

Year	*Publisher*	*Developer*
2001	Cryo Interactive	Cryo Interactive

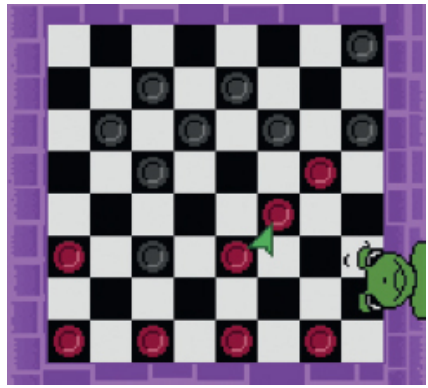
WHEN IT WAS initially released on PC (and later PS2), Gift's main gimmick was that it was a parody of video game and movie tropes. The Game Boy Color version ditches almost all of this, essentially turning it into a more straightforward adventure game in the Zelda style (that's not to say it's a necessarily bad example of the genre, though). You play as Gift, a small devil creature who has to find seven magical gnomes and return them to his love interest, Lolita Globo, so she can be the next Snow White. It plays like a series of Zelda-like dungeons although, somewhat awkwardly, you can pass through any locked door in the game by running into it and repeatedly pausing and unpausing. ■

FACT

In Germany, the word 'gift' means 'poison', so the Germany version was renamed Gifty. Which means 'poisony'. Probably.

GOBS OF GAMES

Year	2000
Publisher	The 3DO Company
Developer	2N Productions



SOMETIMES IT'S PERFECTLY acceptable to want quantity over quality: I'd happily binge an entire box set of bad '80s horror movies than watch a short arthouse film. As far as critics were concerned, however, Gobs of Games was not evidence of this, offering a hefty selection of mini-games but not really gripping the player with any of them. The 16 games on offer here are split into four categories. There are seven peg board games (which are basically variations on Chinese Checkers), six paper games (including Hangman, Tic-Tac-Toe and Dot Block), two sliding puzzles and a 'Board Games' section which only features Checkers. Occasionally cute animals will poke their heads in front of the action, but other than that what's on offer is very basic. ■

FACT

In America, 'gobs' means a large amount of something. In the UK, a gob is a big splodge of phlegmy spit. Perhaps wisely, then, the EU version was renamed Games Frenzy.

GODZILLA: THE SERIES

Year 1999
Publisher Crave Entertainment
Developer Crawfish Interactive

THE *GODZILLA* ANIMATED series was a sequel to the 1998 Roland Emmerich movie, and is based on the child of that Godzilla, who's imprinted on a human and can be controlled by him to destroy other monsters on behalf of the human race. This Game Boy Color adaptation has you playing as this new good-zilla as he defeats a series of monsters, but as he does so he's continually attacked by the military. As the game progresses and more monsters are defeated, then, you also find out more about why the military is attacking this supposed 'nice' Godzilla. As you walk slowly through all seven stages you can spit fireballs at enemies or perform a tail whip to hit flying foes at waist height. ■

FACT

Two of the show's 40 episodes were never aired on TV because the show was taken off the schedule to make way for new series. They were eventually released on DVD.

GODZILLA: THE SERIES – MONSTER WARS

Year 2000
Publisher Crave Entertainment
Developer Crawfish Interactive

IN THE SECOND Godzilla: The Series game, Godzilla makes his way through a new set of locations including Nigeria, New York and the bottom of the Pacific Ocean.While the general idea is the same, the game has undergone some changes to make it a little more user-friendly. Whereas in the first game Godzilla always walked forwards, here you have to move him by pressing Right on the D-Pad. A new cursor appears to help players better aim Godzilla's fireballs, something that was tricky before. New moves include a foot stomp and a claw swipe, but not all additions make the game easier. Godzilla recharged health automatically in the game's predecessor, but this time you have to collect health pick-ups. ■

FACT

When TriStar Pictures' rights to the Godzilla character expired in 2003, Godzilla's IP owner Toho brought it to the main Japanese film series and called it *Zilla*.

GOLD AND GLORY: THE ROAD TO EL DORADO

Year 2000
Publisher Ubisoft
Developer Planet Interactive

BASED ON THE DreamWorks movie *The Road to El Dorado*, this game follows con-artist protagonists Miguel and Tulio as they find a map that leads to the fabled Lost City of Gold. Starting in Spain, the pair have to travel through 20 stages of well-animated platforming hijinks, taking in the likes of a waterfall, a swamp, a temple and El Dorado itself. The game also makes use of the Ubi Key feature included in some Game Boy Color games: if another user has a game with Ubi Key support you can connect to each other and unlock bonuses. In this case, activating Ubi Key gets you a bonus stage set in a subterranean area. ■

FACT

Although these days it's generally believed to be a good movie, at its initial release *The Road to El Dorado* was a flop, grossing $76 million worldwide on a budget of $95 million.

GRAND THEFT AUTO

Year 1999
Publisher Rockstar Games
Developer Tarantula Studios

ALTHOUGH TO THE untrained eye it looked 2D, the original Grand Theft Auto on PS1 and PC actually combined 3D cities and 2D car sprites, with the camera set to a birdseye view. This Game Boy Color port, then, required a complete overhaul to present the entire game as 2D, and Tarantula did an admirable job of it, cutting no missions at all. The game has you playing as a hired gun tasked with taking on a variety of dirty jobs, from killing targets to stealing cars. The Game Boy Color's fewer buttons means the game is slightly more awkward to control than the PS1 version – getting in a car and shooting your gun have very similar commands – but when it all works it's a reasonable port. ■

FACT

If you select the character Kelly and rename him Sumner, you unlock 15 more characters, all based on members of the Tarantula development team.

GRAND THEFT AUTO 2

Year 2000
Publisher Rockstar Games
Developer Tarantula Studios

THE SECOND GAME in the GTA series stuck with the top-down viewpoint (this was still before the series would go third-person 3D), so another Game Boy Color port was developed. This time you're going wild in the streets of Anywhere City, once again taking on missions but this time also keeping an eye on your reputation with a trio of gangs who all hate each other. If you're seen to be helping one gang more, you'll be in trouble with the others. the GBC version includes its own custom soundtrack, which appears to consist of 8-bit versions of actual songs: I certainly spotted AC-DC's 'Back in Black' and Michael Jackson's 'Bad', two songs that aren't in the console versions. ■

FACT

Somewhat confusingly, the player's sprite in the GBC version is identical to the police sprites, meaning it can be hard to tell them apart during standoffs.

GREMLINS: UNLEASHED!

Year 2001
Publisher Light and Shadow Production
Developer Planet Interactive

GREMLINS IS A tricky IP because some fans prefer the good guy, Gizmo, while others prefer the Gremlins themselves. This platformer solves the issue by letting players control either Gizmo or the 'main' Gremlin, Stripe, as they explore 10 stages from the first movie including Billy's house, the school lab, the swimming pool, Mrs Deagle's house, the movie theatre and the mall. Gizmo has to collect five pairs of sunglasses in each stage, while using his camera flash and his bow to kill the Gremlins roaming around. Stripe has to collect water bottles (so he can make more Gremlins), while avoiding real-world hazards like lightbulbs. Gameplay is similar to The Road to El Dorado, but with more leaps of faith. ■

FACT

The Mall stage had toys of Robocop, Pokemon and Hello Kitty but these were removed. An annoyed developer hid them in the game's code, with a message blaming 'those f*cking LSD guys'.

THE GRINCH

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Konami Konami

BASED ON THE live-action Jim Carrey film *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (but favouring a more cartoon-like style), this game has you playing as the green grump himself as he tries to ruin the festive season for everyone. It's a sort of stealth-based take on Pac-Man, because the aim is to collect all the presents in each maze-like stage, but to do so without being spotted by any of the Who children walking around. If any of them see the Grinch, they'll run to him extremely quickly, and if they catch him they'll shower him with love, touching his heart and preventing him from completing his task. Thankfully, you can knock them onto their backsides with snowballs if needed. ■

FACT

Some of the stages later in the game have you instead playing as Max, the Grinch's dog. He can't attack enemies so his stages are pure stealth.

GUTE ZEITEN SCHLECHTE ZEITEN QUIZ

	✗	✓	✗
Year	2000	2000	2000
Publisher	Software	Software	
Developer			

IF YOU'RE GERMAN, you'll probably be fully aware of *Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten* (Good Times, Bad Times), which is a soap opera that's been running five days a week since 1992. But just how much do you know about the show? That's what this quiz game aims to find out. There are over 1,000 questions about the show, split into seven categories covering such topics as 'emotion and jealousy', 'melancholy and fate' and 'sassy and fatal'. There's a single-player mode where you have to get an answer in each category right before time runs out, but you can't really call yourself a true *Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten* fan (trust me) unless you're competing against someone else with a Link Cable. Viel Glück! ■

FACT

The first 230 episodes were rewrites of Australian soap *The Restless Years*. From episode 231 on, the scripts were completely original. As of 2024, there are now over 8,000 episodes.

HALLOWEEN RACER

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Microids Visual Impact

THE TYPE OF game that presumably sells much better in one particular month, Halloween Racer is a karting game featuring a cast of spooky themed characters. There are six characters to choose between: at first you can only choose a knight, a scarecrow or a witch, but eventually you unlock a skeleton, a penguin and a rabbit. If you're starting to think the game maybe struggles to commit to the Halloween theme, this isn't helped by the choice of stages: two sci-fi themed ones (Vulcan and Red Moon), one set in Egypt, one set in a mine and two unlockable ones in a jungle and an icefield. While it plays fast and loose with the theme, then, the game does perform relatively well. ■

FACT

The game got a sequel of sorts in 2001, with PS1 title Monster Racer. It's more of the same with more racers like a bigfoot, a werewolf and a vampire.

HAMTARO: HAM-HAMS UNITE!

Year 2002
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Pax Softnica

THE LAST GBC game released in the west (due to its January 2003 release in Europe), this game is based on the *Hamtaro* manga series in Japan, which tells the story of a small hamster and his adventures with his other hamster friends. Hamtaro's clubhouse is oddly quiet, so he decides to head out and look for his pals so he can bring them all back. The main gameplay mechanic is learning a language called Hamchat: at first you start with four words ('Hamha' means hello, 'Digdig' makes Hamtaro dig, 'Tack-Q' makes him hit things and 'Hif- Hif' makes him sniff), and as you interact with others you learn new phrases (and therefore actions) which can help you convince specific Ham-Hams to follow you. ■

FACT

The animation for 'hamsolo' (lonely) saw Hamtaro sadly rubbing the ground in the Japanese version. This looked a bit too much like something dodgy, so it was replaced in the west with him wiping his eyes.

HANDS OF TIME

Year 2001 *Publisher* Titus Software *Developer* Mirage

IN AN ALTERNATE reality, a Great War was dominated by a single nation, due to its creation of a time machine. Years have passed and this nation now rules the world, so a top scientist decides enough is enough. Sneaking into his lab, he uses the time machine to send his son Sebastian back to the time of the Great War so he can destroy the prototype time machine and change history. Just as Sebastian enters the machine his father is seized by guards, so now not only does he have to destroy the time machine, he also has to get back to the present day and rescue his old man. The game's nine stages are overhead affairs, split into separate screens, making it a bit like Zelda with guns. ■

FACT

Although it's never really specified if this alternate reality Great War is supposed to be based on real life, when Sebastian uses the time machine he goes to 1943, during World War II.

HANG TIME BASKETBALL

Year 2001
Publisher Rocket Games
Developer DAG

MUCH LIKE ITS football game Full Time Soccer, Hang Time Basketball is an unlicensed sports game released by Datel under its Rocket Games pseudonym. The game has numerous options, including game speed, individual skill settings for each side and how long each game should be. What it doesn't appear to have, oddly, is the ability to actually choose your team. Instead, whether you select the Single Game or Tournament mode, you're randomly assigned one of the eight international teams in the game, meaning you have to basically keep quitting out of the mode and starting it again until you get the team you want. While Full Time Soccer is a surprisingly competent offering, there are numerous better GBC basketball games than this. ■

FACT

Hang Time and Full Time were sold as a twopack which looked like two Game Boy boxes next to each other but was actually one long box, with a single 2-in-1 cartridge in it.

HARLEY DAVIDSON: RACE ACROSS AMERICA

Year 2000 *Publisher* WizardWorks *Developer* Running

Dog Software

THIS OFFICIALLY LICENSED motorbike racing game has you picking one of four Harley- Davidson motorcycles – the XL1200 Sportster, the FLHRCI Road King Classic, the FLSTF Fat Boy or the FXSTD Softail Deuce – and racing, as the title puts it, across America. Well, the bottom half at least. There are four locations to race through, all very much in the lower half of the map: the Florida Everglades, the Deep South, the Arizona Desert and the California Coast. The main gimmick in this game is the fact that your bike's gas runs out pretty quickly (which isn't the best ad for Harley-Davidson, let's face it). This means you need to look out for roadside gas pumps and brake next to them to fill up the tank. ■

FACT

In 2020, Harley-Davidson stopped selling Sportsters in Europe because of emissions standards. It resumed in 2021 with the Sportster S, the first Sportster with a different engine since 1986.

HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS

Year 2002
Publisher Electronic Arts
Developer Griptonite Games

BASED ON THE movie of the second Harry Potter book, this RPG has Harry and chums trying to clear his name and solve the mystery of the Chamber of Secrets. Battling is a turn-based affair, and new to this sequel is the ability to have up to three people in your party, with magic spells naturally making up the majority of your attacks. There are also some mini-games, including one where you drive Mr Weasley's flying Anglia car, one where you have to remove gnomes from a garden, headless bowling and – something missing from the first game – the ability to play quidditch. Of all the video game adaptations of the Chamber of Secrets, it's generally agreed that the GBC version is by far the most faithful. ■

FACT

It's impossible to legitimately complete the game 100%, because three enemies in the Folio Bruti (Doxy Queen, Dark Goblin and Emerald Firecrab) don't actually appear at any point.

HARRY POTTER AND THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

Year 2001
Publisher Electronic Arts
Developer Griptonite Games

IF YOU'VE NEVER dabbled with Harry Potter and are looking to start – despite its author's subsequent outbursts making it clear that she's a Slytherin – then this is the obvious place. Telling the story of the first film and book, you play as Harry as he starts at Hogwarts, learns spells and collects Famous Witches and Wizards cards to unlock extra powers. Missions include buying your wand and school supplies, boarding the Hogwarts Express, rescuing Hermione from a Troll and finally finding the Philosopher's Stone (or Sorcerer's Stone, if you're from North America). Combat is still turn-based, but in this first game you only ever battle enemies as Harry alone, meaning it's less strategic and varied than it is in Chamber of Secrets. ■

FACT

The game is mainly based on the book because the film was still in production. The game was released just six days after its UK release and on the same day as its US one.

HARVEST MOON GBC

Year 1999
Publisher Natsume / Nintendo
Developer Tose

DESPITE THE SLIGHT tweak to the name, this is essentially a re-release of Harvest Moon GB with added Game Boy Color support, meaning the game is practically unchanged other then ability to use your hoe with added hue. The only other notable change is the addition of Super Game Boy support, meaning if you want to play the original Game Boy version on your TV with limited colour features and a snazzy border, you can now do this. Otherwise, it's the same situation as with the standard Game Boy release: a simplified version of the console Harvest Moon series, with key features like marriage removed. Naturally, if you have the choice between Harvest Moon GB and GBC, get this version. ■

FACT

When naming your character, if the first letter is uppercase you can grow eggplants and carrots, and if it's lowercase you can grow peanuts and broccoli. Start with a symbol and you can grow all four.

HARVEST MOON 2 GBC

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Natsume / Ubisoft Victor Interactive Software

THE SECOND HANDHELD Harvest Moon opens with the mayor of a struggling village reluctantly agreeing that he might need to build a theme park on a piece of abandoned farmland to bring in some income. Your character convinces him to hold fire, and instead give you three years to turn that rundown land back into a thriving, lucrative farm again. Thus begins more of the same as the previous game, only with some new features. You can now keep sheep (as well as the previous cows and chickens), whose wool provides an extra source of income. Once you collect enough wood you can also have a greenhouse built in your farm, which lets you grow unique herbs and flowers for profit. ■

FACT

You can pull a sneaky trick to avoid hurricanes. If it's raining or snowing the day before, you can work until you get sick. Being sick skips a day, meaning you miss the hurricane damage.

HARVEST MOON 3 GBC

Year 2001
Publisher Natsume
Developer Victor Interactive Software

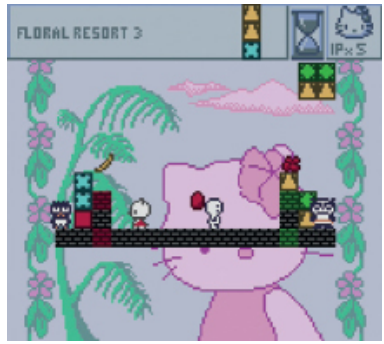
ALTHOUGH THE FIRST two Harvest Moon GBC games let you choose between a boy or girl farmer, the game was pretty much identical either way. That changes for Harvest Moon 3, which changes the gameplay significantly depending on who you choose, with plenty of eyebrowraising gender-based mechanics. The boy is good at planting crops, and has access to tools which can level up, while the girl is better at taking care of animals and has exclusive access to the brush, shampoo and milker, meaning they're relied upon to get milk and wool. The end of the game for the girl is to get married, but if you're playing as the boy you can continue beyond that and have kids. ■

FACT

In Japan, the game was released as two separate versions (one starring the boy and one starring the girl), but these were combined into one for the west.

HELLO KITTY'S CUBE FRENZY

Year 1999
Publisher NewKidCo
Developer Torus Games



I CAN'T STRESS enough how utterly wild Hello Kitty is about cubes. She can't get enough of them, hence the title of this puzzle game. She manages to hide her unbridled excitement well, however, because it's a relatively slow-paced puzzler which is a bit of a cross between Tetris and a platformer. As blocks of varying shapes drop to the floor, you have to arrange them to create steps so Kitty can climb up and collect all the fruit in each stage. If you mess up, all is not lost: by making three blocks of the same colour touch they'll disappear, clearing the area a bit for another attempt. Some stages include her friends Badtz-Maru, Pandaba and Hana-Maru, who get in the way of your plans. ■

FACT

Each set of stages has a different theme, and has Kitty wearing a different outfit, including a football kit, a school uniform, a spacesuit, a bikini and a wedding dress.

HERCULES: THE LEGENDARY JOURNEYS

Year	2001
Publisher	Titus Software
Developer	Titus Software

SEEMINGLY PLANNED FOR release in North America but eventually becoming a Europeonly title, this is based on the ‘90s *Hercules* TV series of the same name. It follows its own standalone story, with Hercules being sent down to Earth by his father Zeus to take on various deeds so that the human race will still believe in gods (otherwise he and every other god will disappear). The game jumps between a top-down adventure – similar to the Zelda games – and side-scrolling action platforming, culminating in a final battle against a Cyclops. The game can be linked to a copy of Xena: Warrior Princess, letting you play as Xena in Hercules and vice versa. Of course, this was a bit trickier for American players. ■

FACT

Hercules actor Kevin Sorbo and *Xena* actor Lucy Lawless strongly dislike each other. Their rivalry got more heated when Lawless accused the Trump-supporting Sorbo of encouraging right-wing mobs.

HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC

Year 2000
Publisher The 3DO Company
Developer KnowWonder

THIS IS A Game Boy Color port of the 1995 PC game Heroes of Might and Magic: A Strategic Quest, which was the first in the Heroes of Might and Magic series. There are four different types of hero – barbarians, sorceresses, knights and warlocks – and it's your mission to use their skills to eventually take over the land. While you have to level up your hero's stats with battles and other special events, you also have to maintain the running of your town (and try to upgrade it to a castle), because this is where you can earn gold, recruit creatures to help you in battle, teach new spells to your hero and build ships which let you take to the seas. ■

FACT

Heroes of Might and Magic is a spin-off of the main Might and Magic series, which started in 1986. At the time of writing, there have been seven main Heroes games.

HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC II

Year 2000
Publisher The 3DO Company
Developer KnowWonder

THE SEQUEL BORROWS elements from the first three PC games for a sort of mish-mash. Whereas the first GBC offering only gave you a selection of scenarios to choose from, this time the game has a separate Campaign mode in which you take control of a castle in the Dragon Land and have to build your resources so you can defeat the enemies who guard the lands beyond. This time there are 40 heroes to choose from, split into eight categories: knight, cleric, barbarian, battlemage, ranger, druid, beastmaster and warlock. There are 30 new enemy classes to fight against, and a new set of scenarios is available for those who prefer that structure. ■

FACT

The game has a rather unfortunate bug where battles will occasionally glitch and put you against a stack of 99 superpowered monsters, essentially killing you.

HEXCITE: THE SHAPES OF VICTORY

Year 1999
Publisher Ubisoft
Developer Landwarf

HEXCITE IS A two-player board game set on a large hexagonal board which looks similar to a Chinese Checkers one. Each player is given a random selection of 18 pieces from a choice of seven different shapes, and the aim is to take turns placing them on the board, filling any spaces they can. When you place your piece, you get 5 points for each side of it that touches an existing piece, and if you can place the last piece that completes one of the larger hexagonal areas on the board you get bonus points. Although the main meat is the Level Game mode, where you play against a series of progressively smarter CPU opponents, there's also a 2P mode and a Practice mode which teaches techniques. ■

FACT

The title screen claims that 'researchers have found that excessive Hexcite play causes human brains to eventually form six sides'. I couldn't find a medical journal confirming this.

HOLE IN ONE GOLF

Year 1999
Publisher Natsume
Developer Natsume

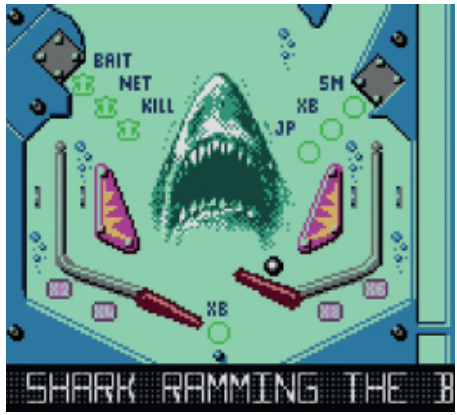
THIS GOLF GAME features three fictional courses to play on: Tokyo (which is a relatively generic course), Arizona (which has more sand traps) and Hawaii (which has more water hazards). The game features the basic Stroke Play and Tournament modes you would expect from a golf title of its era, but it also includes one thing you probably wouldn't: this is one of a handful of Game Boy Color games with rumble support built into the cartridge (powered by a AAA battery). Despite its features, however, the game was criticised for its rather zoomed in view, meaning it's possible to pan around and see the hole but when it comes to aiming your shot you're usually aiming at an offscreen target. ■

FACT

Just in case lining up your shot isn't tricky enough, at times animals will roam onto the course and move the ball.

HOLLYWOOD PINBALL

Year 1999
Publisher Take Two Interactive
Developer Tarantula Studios



THERE ARE A few pinball games on both Game Boy models so this one differentiates itself by focusing on tables based on movies. There are seven tables in total, each spoofing a certain movie: Shark! is based on *Jaws*, Terrordactyl! is based on monster movies like *King Kong*, Double Agent is a nod to the Bond series, The Legend of Robin Hood is selfexplanatory, Galaxy Wars is a clear *Star Wars* pastiche, Ancient Temple of the Aztecs is an *Indiana Jones* knock-off and Motel Hell is based on *Psycho*. Each table has a different layout, its own 'close but not too close' music and reasonable enough physics for the era, making it one of the better GBC pinball offerings. ■

FACT

There is actually a horror movie called *Motel Hell*, so in deliberately avoiding one film the game unwittingly names one of its tables after another.

HOT WHEELS: STUNT TRACK DRIVER

Year Publisher Developer

2000 Mattel Interactive Lucky Chicken Games

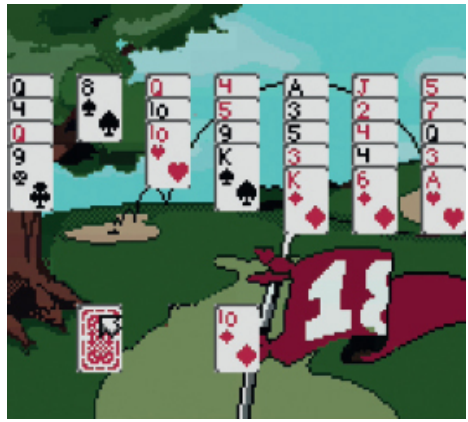
THE COLOURFUL AND varied nature of the Hot Wheels toys makes them a prime candidate for video games, and this GBC game focuses on the stunt track toys that have been released over the years. It plays a bit like an updated version of Excitebike, with races viewed from a side-on perspective, and players simply shifting between lanes. The are numerous gaps in the track where you can perform big jumps: during this time you can move the D-Pad to perform flips or rolls, and if you can successfully land after this you'll gain a brief speed boost. There are five real-life Hot Wheels cars to choose from: Shadow Jet, Saltflat Racer, Tow Jam, Way 2 Fast and the unlockable Twin Mill. ■

FACT

Twin Mill is considered the most iconic of the Hot Wheels cars. First released in 1969, it was the first Hot Wheels car with a completely original design, created entirely in-house at Mattel.

HOYLE CARD GAMES

Year 2000
Publisher Sierra On-Line
Developer Sandbox Interactive



THE *HOYLE'S OFFICIAL Book of Games* series started in the late '80s and spawned countless volumes and spin-offs all the way up to the early 2010s. As the name suggests, this one focuses on card games, and it isn't stingy with the content. After choosing one of 14 avatars, you can then select from no fewer than 12 different card games: Crazy 8s, Cribbage, Gin, Go Fish, Hearts, Old Maid, Spades, War, Four Free, Golf, Klondike and Pyramid. It's not without fault: most games are presented as-is with few options to tweak the rules, and it can only be played by 1–2 players despite some of the games being 4-player affairs (CPU opponents make up the numbers). ■

FACT

The 14 avatars range from the normal (Amanda is a 'promising university student') to the bizarre (Croc is 'the smartest reptile ever found in the Australian outback').

HOYLE CASINO

Year 2000
Publisher Sierra On-Line
Developer Pulsar Interactive

ALTHOUGH CARD GAMES are the bread and butter of the Hoyle's series, it did dabble in other collections. Hoyle's Casino, you'll be unsurprised to read, focuses on gambling games, with a total of seven to choose from: Blackjack, Craps, Poker, Pai Gow Poker, Roulette, Slots (which has four separate machines) and Video Poker (which also has four machines). After creating your player and signing in, you're given a starting balance of $5,000 and set free to go wild in your game of choice. As with Hoyle's Card Games you're given the option to play with another player, but whereas that allowed two players to share the same Game Boy, here you need a Link Cable. ■

FACT

The earlier PC versions of the Hoyle's series added Sierra characters as opponents, including Leisure Suit Larry.

HUGO 2½

Year 1999
Publisher Infogrames
Developer Bit Managers

AS YOU MAY remember from the previous section (if you've been reading this book in order, that is), Hugo 2 was a European release for the original Game Boy in which players controlled Hugo the troll in four rather similar mini-games. Hugo 2½ is an enhanced re-release for the Game Boy Color which obviously adds colour to the Game Boy version's monochrome graphics but also adds a fifth mini-game to mix things up a little. Joining the Ice Cave, Snowboard, Diver and Forest mini-games from the previous version is Aviator, a game in which Hugo is flying a biplane through a thunderstorm, collecting gold while avoiding lightning strikes and balloons containing TNT. Since 2½ also works on the standard Game Boy, it essentially makes Hugo 2 obsolete. ■

FACT

A total of 21 mini-games were created for the main Hugo series. All the major Hugo releases based on the TV show's mini-game format feature minigames from this pool of 21.

HUGO: BLACK DIAMOND FEVER

Year 2001
Publisher ITE Media
Developer ITE Media

THE EVIL WITCH Sculla has found an old recipe that will turn her into the cruellest witch in the world. The recipe requires rare black diamonds from a volcano island, so she has the entire population of the island's Kikurean people kidnapped while they sleep, enslaving them and making them work in the island's mines to get the black diamonds for her. Hearing about this, Hugo flies to the island to save the day. Black Diamond Fever is a platformer consisting of 47 stages in which Hugo has to defeat all the enemies on each stage by whipping them into submission, which in turn transforms them into black diamonds which unlock a Kikurean's prison cell. Somehow. ■

FACT

The evil witch Sculla is a regular villain in the Hugo series. Over time her name changed to Scylla, which certainly suits this writer because it's less like my surname.

HUGO: THE EVIL MIRROR

Year Publisher Developer 2002 ITE Media ITE Media

NOT ONE FOR giving up, Scylla (whose name has now been changed) comes up with a new plan. While Hugo's family is enjoying Christmas, Scylla enters their home and traps Hugo in an evil mirror, before smashing it so he can no longer escape, and scattering the pieces in the wintry wind. She then kidnaps his wife Hugolina, leaving their three children behind. The kids decide that the only way to save their parents is to head out and collect all the glass pieces. Like Black Diamond Fever, The Evil Mirror is another platformer, but this time instead of a whip you defeat enemies by zapping them with a freeze ray, turning them into blocks of ice then dropping the ice off ledges. ■

FACT

The Finnish Museum of Games in Tampere, Finland has a Hugo game from the TV show as one of its exhibits, along with a telephone which visitors can use to play.

HYPE: THE TIME QUEST

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Ubisoft Planet Interactive

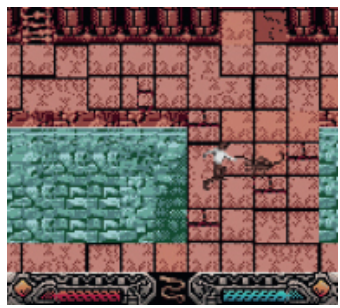
THERE HAVE BEEN plenty of Lego games released over the years, but not too many Playmobil ones. Hype: The Time Quest is a notable exception, using the German toy brand as a basis for an entertaining adventure game. The game stars Hype, a Playmobil knight who's sent back in time by his sworn enemy Barnak the Black Knight. Hype has to figure out how to get back to his own time and save his kingdom from Barnak's evil clutches. The game's exploration sections are played from a Zeldastyle overhead perspective like many RPGs, then when you reach a section where action is expected the game switches to a side-on action platformer, making it a more accessible adventure for turn-basedcombat-phobes. ■

FACT

The PC and PS2 got a different Hype: The Time Quest which looked like a Playmobil Ocarina of Time. It was also in development for the Nintendo 64, but this version was cancelled.

INDIANA JONES AND THE INFERNAL MACHINE

Year Publisher Developer 2001 THQ HotGen



THE BEST WAY to describe Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine is that it's a thirdperson 3D adventure like Tomb Raider (or, indeed, the N64 version of Indy) but it's played from an overhead viewpoint to make it work in 2D on the Game Boy Color. Playing as Indy himself, you have to explore 14 areas in search of the pieces of the Infernal Machine, which is said to open a portal to another dimension. Indy is initially armed with his whip and gun, but also has to collect other items along the way. Among the most important is the need to regularly pick up antidotes, because many of the creatures you encounter in these dangerous environments can sting and poison Indy. ■

FACT

If you play a nearperfect game you can unlock a bonus final stage called Return to Peru, where Indy heads back to the temple at the start of Raiders of the Lost Ark to get the idol.

INSPECTOR GADGET: OPERATION

MADKACTUS

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Ubisoft RFX Interactive

THANKFULLY NOT BASED on the Matthew Broderick movie and instead focused on the much-loved cartoon by DIC (shush now), Operation Madkactus has Inspector Gadget, his niece Penny and her dog Brain investigating a new virus which is infecting people who buy a specific brand of cactus plant (naturally, the evil Dr Claw is behind it). The game is an action platformer where Gadget can pick up various gizmos to help him along the way, but players can also switch to Penny or Brain mid-level to make use of their abilities. Penny is the only character who can swim underwater, for example, while Brain is best both high and low, thanks to his double-jump move and his ability to crawl through small gaps. ■

FACT

Quite fittingly for a show all about fancy technology, *Inspector Gadget* was the first animated series to be broadcast in stereo sound.

INTERNATIONAL KARATE 2000

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Studio 3 Studio 3

IN THE 1980S, British developer Archer Maclean enjoyed success with International Karate and its sequel International Karate+. This Game Boy title is essentially the third game in the series, although this time Maclean had no involvement. After choosing from 12 extremely stereotypical fighters (from Russian caricature Ivan to a bearded South American called Fidel), you travel around the world taking on other fights in best-of-three karate contests. Each round has you trying to land hits on your opponent, with a full point awarded for knocking them over with a solid hit and a half point for knocking them over with a less convincing one. The game's more technical moveset and its focus on landing single hits make it slower than fighters from Capcom or SNK. ■

FACT

The Game Boy Advance would get another entry in the series, but while it shared the International Karate+ name of the second game, it had the stereotypical characters from 2000.

INTERNATIONAL RALLY

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Konami Konami

KNOWN IN EUROPE as Cross Country Racing and in Japan by its slightly more excitable name It's a World Rally, this is a spiritual successor to Konami's 1985 game Hyper Rally. There are four fictional rally teams to choose from – Clover, Azure, Realdrive and Rallymate – and each has their own car with its own strengths and weaknesses (though there are a further 10 cars to unlock over time). There's a Championship mode, where you take on a series of multi-stage rally events, earning tuning parts which can be used to improve your car. There's also a Rally mode, where you start in 28th place and have to work your way up to first over a series of races. ■

FACT

The game was originally announced as Konami Rally, alongside a PS1 version. the PS1 version was scrapped, but a prototype version was leaked in 2021.

INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER 99

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Konami Konami

FOLLOWING THE SOLE International Superstar Soccer game released on the standard Game Boy, the Game Boy Color got two of them. The ‘99 edition is arguably the weaker of the two, offering fewer modes and a choppier frame rate. Still, that’s not to say it’s entirely unplayable: there are 32 international teams to choose from and you can either play a single game or take part in a tournament. While each team’s rosters are technically based on real players, they’ve all been tweaked so the names aren’t exact. Scotland, for example, has Colins, Dury and Gallager up front (instead of Collins, Durie and Gallagher), so if you know the team’s real-life lineups you can at least have a decent guess at who they’re supposed to be.

FACT

This is the only ISS game with 99 in the title. The N64 got ISS 64, ISS 98 and ISS 2000, while the PlayStation got ISS 98 then ISS Pro Evolution.

INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER 2000

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Konami Konami

KONAMI COULD HAVE easily taken the last ISS game and made some tweaks to the teams and players, but International Superstar Soccer 2000 is a completely different game on the pitch. The gameplay feels a lot more like a cut-down version of the original SNES game, which fans will tell you is a good thing. The gameplay improvements aside, the game features 48 national teams and six stadiums to choose from, and lets players do a full International Cup (which is the World Cup in all but name), or a custom league or tournament. The only setback is that player names are now wildly different: Scotland's lineup, for example, now consists of such utterly random names as Zuliva, Bamdat, Parle and Chaley. ■

FACT

In Japan, the three ISS games on the Game Boy and GBC were called World Soccer GB, World Soccer GB 2 and World Soccer GB 2000 instead.

INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Konami Konami

NOT TO BE confused with ESPN International Track & Field, this separate game is slightly less po-faced and focuses more on the athletes taking part. There are 10 events here, with the main Hyper mode splitting them into two five-event days: 100m Dash, Long Jump, Shot Put, High Jump and 400m Race on day one, and the 110m Hurdles, Discus Throw, Pole Vault, Javelin Throw and 1500m Race on day two. Also included is a Story mode, where you name your own character and start off as a junior at Hyper College, then schedule your weekly calendar between training, resting and socialising as you prepare to become a world class athlete. ■

FACT

Hyper mode lets you choose between different characters, who all have strengths and weaknesses. Win Hyper mode and you'll unlock Mr Iron, who dominates everything.

JANOSCH: DAS GROSSE PANAMA-SPIEL

Year	1999
Publisher	Infogrames
Developer	Neon Software

JANOSCH IS A German author and illustrator of children's books, and this is a game based on his creations. Translated as The Great Panama Game, this adventure begins when a crate from Panama washes up at a river and is discovered by a bear and a tiger. The two friends open the crate to discover that it's full of bananas – which they both love – and deciding that Panama must be some sort of paradise where bananas are plentiful, they decide to go off on a quest to find it. The game, which is aimed squarely at children, has you playing as the tiger (with occasional advice from the bear) as you walk around collecting items and solving puzzles. ■

FACT

Although the game is German, it's fully playable by anyone because instead of text, dialogue is told through illustrations that appear at the bottom of the screen.

JEFF GORDON XS RACING

Year 1999
Publisher ASC Games
Developer Natsume

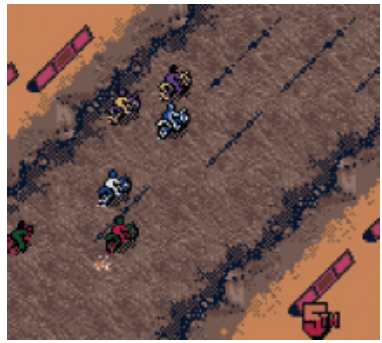
IT'S ALL WELL and good securing the name of a NASCAR legend for your game, but how do you then appeal to a wider audience who may not care about NASCAR? For ASC Games, the answer was XS Racing, a futuristic game where players get a glimpse of what the next generation of stock car racing may look like. There are five teams to choose between, two of which are sponsored by brands (Pepsi and Frito), and all of which have their own unique car with its own stats. These futuristic cars can drive at speeds of more than 340mph (which looks surprisingly slow in action, all things considered), and can also hit jumps, with little wings popping out to help the car glide. ■

FACT

A PC version of XS Racing was released, offering polygonal racing instead. It was also in development for the N64 and PlayStation but those versions were scrapped.

JEREMY MCGRATH SUPERCROSS 2000

Year 2000
Publisher Acclaim
Developer M4 Entertainment



FOR THE GBC version of its licensed racing game, Acclaim wisely chose not to replicate the over-theshoulder viewpoint from the console versions and instead decided to opt for an overhead, distant view. The Championship mode lets you choose from a series of racers, but not McGrath himself (he's too good, you see), then compete in a series of dirt races riddled with bumps, lumps and jumps. When you hit the air you have a split-second chance to perform a brief stunt, and successfully landing after this gives you a little speed boost. There are also power-ups, including a shield (which lets you knock over anyone you drive into) and a bomb (which instantly causes the racer in front of you to fall over). ■

FACT

Not content with racing on two wheels, McGrath has also dabbled with offroad car racing, winning the Pro 2 division of the Lucas Oil Off-Road Racing Series in 2017.

JIMMY WHITE'S CUE BALL

Year 2000
Publisher Vatical Entertainment
Developer Vicarious Visions

THE SEQUEL TO Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker is a curious one on Game Boy Color because it removes the feature the series was most famous for. The original game was best known for its fantastic 3D snooker table environment, whereas for this port of the sequel US studio Vicarious Visions ditched it and went for a topdown 2D view instead. The ditching of 'snooker' from the title is a deliberate one: not only does the game offer the option to play snooker, it also has three separate pool rulesets (straight pool, 8-ball and 9-ball) should you prefer. The game lets you choose your opponent, from the rather mistake-prone Broke Ben to Jimmy White himself. ■

FACT

Vicarious Visions told series creator Archer Maclean they were struggling to get all the red balls on the table, so asked if people in the UK would notice if they removed one and tweaked the points. Maclean said they would.

JUMPSTART: DINO ADVENTURE FIELD TRIP

Year 2001
Publisher Knowledge Adventure
Developer Digital Illusions

JUMPSTART (OR JUMP Ahead, as it was known in the UK) was a series of ‘edutainment’ games for PC and consoles. This Game Boy Advance title has you playing as a dog called Frankie who’s sent back to prehistoric times in a time machine. Frankie has to recover a pterosaur’s missing eggs by taking on four mini-games. Dino Driver has you driving into letters in alphabetical order, Dino Bop is a whack-a-mole game where you only have to hit dinosaurs with a certain type of hat, Brain-o-Saur is a basic tilematching game and Feeding Time has you throwing fruit at dinosaurs. Each of these tasks rewards you with an egg, and if you recover all four you proceed to the next area to repeat the process.

FACT

There were around 80 JumpStart games released between 1994 and 2000, covering different educational topics at different age levels.

THE JUNGLE BOOK: MOWGLI’S WILD ADVENTURE

Year 2000
Publisher Ubisoft
Developer Ubisoft

DESPITE BEING BASED on Disney's animated *Jungle Book* movie, Mowgli's Wild Adventure doesn't really follow the film's story. Instead, the vague plot is about Mowgli learning how to survive in the jungle, by making his way through five worlds: the Sunset Jungle, the Rainbow Jungle, the Temple Ruins, the Treetops and the Desolate Jungle. Mowgli can indulge in some trickery to mix things up a bit: by collecting bananas and throwing them on the floor he can convince some animals to run over and eat them, enabling him to either get past them or use them as a platform. This mechanic, along with the numerous switches and other gizmos encountered, give the game a light puzzle element too. ■

FACT

The game's lead designer was Davide Soliani, who went on to become the creative director of the Mario + Rabbids games and famously wept when Shigeru Miyamoto namechecked him during E3.

KÄPT'N BLAUBÄR: DIE VERRÜCKTE SCHATZSUCHE

Year	2001
Publisher	Ravensburger Interactive
Developer	Shin'en

IF YOU AREN'T familiar with Käpt'n Blaubär (or Captain Bluebear, if you will), he's a German character who originally appeared in a children's TV show and went on to appear in various shows and books. Die Verrückte Schatzsuche (The Crazy Treasure Hunt) is a puzzle game consisting of 90 stages which Käpt'n Blaubär has to navigate to reach the treasure at the end. The aim in each stage is to collect all the stars then step onto the life preserver to clear the level, but the twist is that when you step off a star it turns into a pool of water, meaning you can no longer step on it again. This is further complicated when conveyor belts and weak wooden platforms are added to the mix. ■

FACT

If you're curious about Käptn Blaubär, an English language version of the novel *The 13½ Lives of Captain Bluebear* was released in 2000 and is rather imaginative.

KARATE JOE

Year 2001
Publisher Rocket Games
Developer Octopus Studio

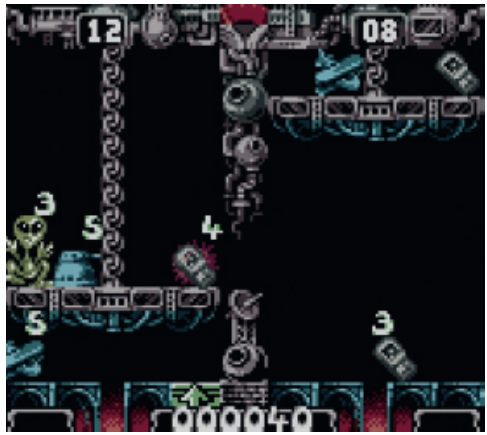
ANOTHER OF THE eight unlicensed games released by Datel under its Rocket Games label, Karate Joe is probably the most competent of the octet. A new boss has taken over the city and his gangs are making life tough for its citizens, so it's up to Karate Joe to take to the streets and teach these new upstarts a lesson, preferably one with his hands and feet. The game plays like a graphically improved version of NES title Kung Fu, with Joe simply walking in one direction and punching or kicking the enemies who come towards him. This simplicity works in its favour, however, resulting in a straightforward but entertaining enough action game. ■

FACT

The Rocket Games collection was initially sold at UK stores HMV and GAME at £14.99 each, then after a while the stock was sold off for cheaper on Datel's website.

KEEP THE BALANCE

Year	2001
Publisher	JoWooD Productions
Developer	Karma Studios



THIS PUZZLE GAME was originally released on PC in 2000 before getting a Game Boy Color port the following year. The aim is to keep a set of scales balanced by making sure the objects on it are evenly distributed. Each object has a numerical value representing its weight, and a number above each scale tells you what the total is, making it easier to see at a glance which is heavier. You can throw new objects onto the scales, either to add to the weight, or to replace an existing object with a heavier or lighter alternative. That would all be fairly straightforward were it not for the fact that some objects interact with each other too. Place animals next to each other, for example, and they may eat each other. ■

FACT

The scales on the PC version hold five objects each while the GBC version's scales only hold four objects, technically making it an easier game.

KELLY CLUB: CLUBHOUSE FUN

Year 2001
Publisher Vivendi Universal Interactive
Developer Vicarious Visions

KELLY IS THE preschool sister of Barbie, aged around 3–5 years old. This is reflected in this mini-game collection, which is comfortably the easiest game on the GBC. Kelly wants to put on a magic show, so she has to find all her friends first. You do this by wandering around her clubhouse and taking on eight (very) simple challenges. These include catching three rabbits, turning caterpillars into butterflies by putting a cursor over them and pressing A, finding the hidden cats in an Egyptian level and making a unicorn collect flags. You play through all eight games a couple of times throughout and they do get a little tricker each time, but only players around the same age as Kelly will struggle. ■

FACT

Kelly is called Shelly in Europe, so the game is called Shelly Club there. These days, Kelly has been replaced by a very similar doll called Chelsea. Best not to ask what's going on with that family.

KEN GRIFFEY JR'S SLUGFEST

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Nintendo Software Creations

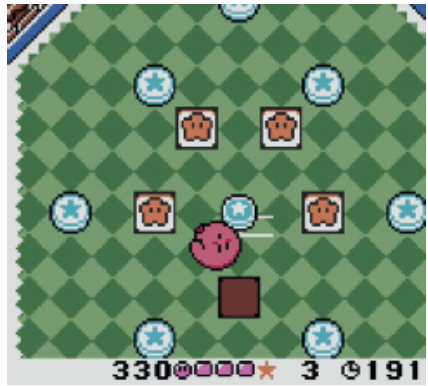
RELEASED A MONTH after the Nintendo 64 game of the same name, Ken Griffey Jr's Slugfest is a baseball game branded with the name of the star outfielder for the then Nintendo-owned Seattle Mariners. Whereas the N64 version opted for an ultrarealistic (for its era) depiction of the sport, the GBC version goes for slightly more stylised visuals, making the players a little more muscular and giving them more exaggerated stances and swing animations. This tweak aside, it's still a serious take on baseball, with full MLB and MLBPA licences meaning real team and player names, as well as a battery back-up option allowing players to save their season progress. There are also little cutscenes during key moments, like closely stolen bases. ■

FACT

On 13 August 1990, Ken Griffey Jr and Ken Griffey Sr both played for the Mariners in the same game, the first ever father-son duo to do so.

KIRBY: TILT 'N' TUMBLE

Year 2001
Publisher Nintendo
Developer HAL Laboratory



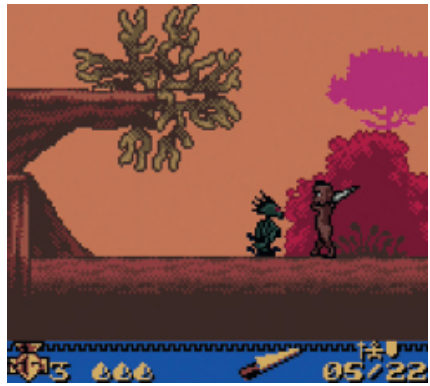
THIS UNIQUE KIRBY spin-off was one of the first Nintendo games to make use of motion controls, long before the Wii showed up on the scene. Kirby has to retrieve the Sparkling Stars to save Dream Land, but rather than the typical platforming action he instead has to roll everywhere. The cartridge – which is translucent pink, incidentally – has a built-in accelerometer, similar to the Wii Remote. By tilting the Game Boy Color (and therefore the cartridge too), players will roll Kirby in that direction, meaning a steady hand is necessary to guide him through the game. The tilt controls mean re-releases have been rare, but it did get added to Nintendo Switch Online's Game Boy library in 2023, using the console's tilt sensors for control. ■

FACT

Although the game can be played on a Game Boy Advance SP, the fact the cartridge is inserted into the bottom of the console rather than the top means the motion controls are reversed.

KIRIKOU

Year	2001
Publisher	Wanadoo Edition
Developer	Planet Interactive



IF IT'S OBSCURE movie tie-ins you're looking for, you're in luck. Kirikou is based on the French animated movie *Kirikou and the Sorceress*, which was never released in the US or UK (outside of a couple of one-off screenings) due to its copious helpings of non-sexualised nudity. The Game Boy Color spin-off is a side-scrolling platformer in which Kirikou – a miracle baby who can speak and walk almost immediately after birth – heads out to stop the evil sorceress Karaba, who's eaten all the men of his village. The game uses sensible sprite work to avoid most of the nudity, though you may get a chuckle at the sight of Kirikou's wee bare bum every time he climbs a ladder. ■

FACT

Questionably, programmer Martial Benoit added a hidden image in the game's code showing Kirikou and his mother smoking, with the caption: 'Kirikou is not good, but he smokes joints.'

KLAX

Year 1999
Publisher Midway
Developer Digital Eclipse

AS MENTIONED IN the first section of this book, the original Game Boy version of Klax was among the least compelling of the arcade game's 25+ ports, mainly because the game is built around matching coloured blocks at speed. The Game Boy Color version, meanwhile, is the complete opposite, not only adding the much-needed colour element to proceedings but also providing a solid port in its own right with arcade-accurate voice samples too. It also adds a Freestyle mode, which gives you a single neverending game, rather than a series of stages with set numbers of matches to clear. This version also has a hidden Snake game and a hidden Minesweeper clone, both of which can be accessed with secret passwords. ■

FACT

Developer Mike Mika hid a marriage proposal to his girlfriend Micki in the game. However, because she didn't really play games, it took her three years to find it. She said yes, though.

KLUSTAR

Year 1999
Publisher Infogrames
Developer Rebellion

KLUSTAR HAS BEEN described by some as a variant on Tetris, but that's really only because it uses similar playing pieces. In reality it's a completely different take on the puzzle genre. You start off with a single square block, which can stick to anything that bumps into it. As numerous Tetris-like blocks approach from various directions, you have to join them to your ever-growing cluster – sorry, 'klustar' – in an attempt to make a 3x3 block, which then disappears. As the cluster grows, it becomes harder to rotate it on the screen, and it's trickier to line up blocks, but if you manage to somehow find a 3x3 block in a large cluster the resulting chain reaction as it all falls together can score big. ■

FACT

Klustar was one of the first games developed by Rebellion, which was owned by brothers Jason and Chris Kingsley. These days the studio is mainly known for the Sniper Elite series.

KNOCKOUT KINGS

Year 1999
Publisher EA Sports
Developer Digital Eclipse

THE KNOCKOUT KINGS series was the precursor to EA's Fight Night games, offering boxing action with a roster of real-life superstars from the past and present. This Game Boy Color title is based on the second console game, Knockout Kings 2000, but only contains 10 boxers compared to the 25 on PS1 and N64: Muhammad Ali, Sugar Ray Leonard, Joe Frazier, Floyd Mayweather Jr, Larry Holmes, Rocky Marciano, Lennox Lewis, Oscar De La Hoya, Michael Grant and Shane Mosley. The game is seemingly inspired by Data East's arcade game Ring King, with a similar perspective and each boxer sporting a cartoonish big head. Voice samples are provided by referee Mills Lane, lending to the authenticity somewhat. ■

FACT

Mills Lane was still well-known to non-boxing fans of a certain era, because he was the referee in MTV's claymation series *Celebrity Deathmatch*.

KONAMI GB COLLECTION VOL 1

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Konami Konami

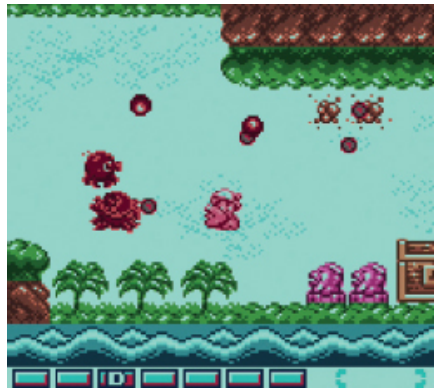
IN 1997, KONAMI decided to bundle some of its Game Boy titles into 4-in-1 cartridges called the Konami GB Collection and release them in Japan. While these were designed for the original Game Boy, by the time they came to Europe they had been colourised and released on the Game Boy Color instead. This first quarter of newlyhued titles, then, consists of Gradius, Castlevania: The Adventure, F1 Spirit and Probotector (aka Operation C). The addition of colour wasn't the only change: F1 Spirit also had to be renamed Konami Racing because the F1 licence was no longer present, and Gradius had originally been released as Nemesis but was renamed for this collection. ■

FACT

Although Operation C is still called Probotector (the European name for Contra), this version is based on the Japanese one, meaning for once the humans weren't replaced by robots.

KONAMI GB COLLECTION VOL 2

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Konami Konami



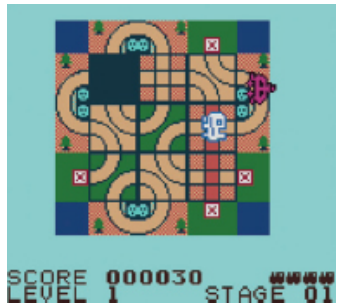
TO MAKE THINGS nice and confusing, the second Konami GB Collection in Europe was actually Vol 4 in Japan. This time the games on offer are Parodius (which had previously only been released in Europe anyway), Quarth, Track & Field and Frogger. For some reason, Quarth was renamed to the far less exciting Block Game, while Track & Field was severely cut down compared to the main release. Whereas the original Game Boy version of Track & Field contains 11 events, the version in GB Collection Vol 2 reduces this to just five: 100m Dash, Long Jump, 110m Hurdles, Javelin Throw and Triple Jump. The multiplayer option is also dropped in this edition. ■

FACT

Whereas all the games in Vol 1 were ported over from previous Game Boy releases, the version of Frogger here is entirely new.

KONAMI GB COLLECTION VOL 3

Year 2000
Publisher Konami
Developer Konami



THE THIRD OF Konami's quadruple bill offerings (or Vol 2 in Japan) is probably the most interesting in terms of new content. It contains colourised versions of previous Game Boy releases Pop'n TwinBee and Motocross Maniacs (although the latter has been given the infinitely more boring title Bikers for some reason), but it also contains Mystical Ninja Starring Goemon, which is actually the Japanese Game Boy game Ganbare Goemon: Sarawareta Ebisumaru given an official English localisation for the first time. Rounding things off is Guttang Gottong, an entirely new Game Boy game which is a port of Konami's 1982 arcade game Loco- Motion, where you play a sliding puzzle to guide a train along a track. ■

FACT

Right before Loco- Motion was ported to the Intellivision in 1983, Activision launched the questionably similar Happy Trails. It's said that rather than sue, Mattel just dropped the price of Loco-Motion.

KONAMI GB COLLECTION VOL 4

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Konami Konami

THE FOURTH AND final Konami GB Collection (or third and penultimate if you lived in Japan) consisted of two Game Boy ports and two brand new ports of Famicom games. The existing Game Boy titles making the jump are Castlevania II: Belmont's Revenge and Gradius II: The Return of the Hero (which had previously been called Nemesis II in Europe and Gradius: The Interstellar Assault in North America). These are accompanied by new ports of Famicom games Yie Ar Kung-Fu and Antarctic Adventure, neither of which made it to the NES in the west and are therefore essentially new releases here. Their addition rounds off an interesting quartet of quartets, and a solid collection of 16 Konami titles. ■

FACT

All the Japanese versions were standard Game Boy releases with Super Game Boy support. The European versions still work on Game Boy, but the Super Game Boy features are missing.

KRTL: JAY UND DIE SPIELZEUGDIEBE

Year Publisher Developer 2000 THQ Eclipse Entertainment

BETWEEN 1995 AND 2007, German TV channel RTL ran a block of children's shows which it dubbed KRTL (presumably Kinder RTL, i.e. Children's RTL). the KRTL mascot was a little lion chap called Jay, and this platformer – whose title translates to Jay and the Toy Thieves – gives Jay his own starring role. As the title implies, Jay's task is to retrieve a bunch of stolen toys, which have been kidnapped (well, kindernapped) by an evil king as a distraction tactic so he can take over the world while parents are trying to console their children. The game takes place over ten stages, and in each of these Jay has to collect a certain number of toys before he can proceed to the next. ■

FACT

Although KRTL is no longer around, there's still the separate channel Super RTL, which contains a section called Toggolino for preschoolers and one called Toggo aimed at older children.

THE LAND BEFORE TIME

Year	2001
Publisher	Conspiracy Entertainment
Developer	Eclipse Entertainment

THE JOYS OF alphabetical order means The Land Before Time is placed directly across from the game it borrows heavily from. This platformer is based on the 1988 animated tear-jerker of the same name and has players controlling Cera, Littlefoot, Ducky and Spike in separate stages as they all try to find each other after being separated by a rockfall. The game's mechanics are copied over from KRTL: Jay und Die Spielzeugdiebe (right down to the status bar at the bottom), but it's not a direct lift, because this time each character has their own abilities. Littlefoot can jump higher and run faster, Cera can move rocks and boulders, Spike can crush boulders outright and Ducky can squeeze into narrow gaps. ■

FACT

The movie's theme song, 'If We Hold On Together', reached #30 in the US charts and #11 in the UK. In Japan, though, it became Diana Ross's only No 1 hit, going platinum four times.

LAS VEGAS COOL HAND

Year 1999
Publisher Take Two Interactive
Developer Tarantula Studios

IF IT'S NOT already clear while flicking through this book, Game Boy and Game Boy Color owners didn't have to look far to find a gambling game or card game compilation for their handheld. Las Vegas Cool Hand (or simply Cool Hand in Europe) was another example of this, but it attempted to favour quality over quantity. While other offerings contained numerous games to choose from, here there are only three: Blackjack, Solitaire and Cribbage. Each has a wide range of options, however: for example, with Blackjack offering four separate rule sets covering how the game is played in London casinos, downtown Vegas, the Las Vegas Strip and Atlantic City. Despite this, the slightly clunky controls let it down a little. ■

FACT

In case you're curious, downtown Vegas rules state that a dealer has to draw on a hand of 17 if an Ace was counted as a 1, while Vegas Strip rules say they have to draw on 16 or less, and stick on 17–21.

LAURA

Year 2000
Publisher Ubisoft
Developer Planet Interactive

THIS CHILDREN'S GAME is based on the PC title Laura's Happy Adventures, with Ubisoft seemingly deciding the Game Boy Color version would benefit from a minimalist title that doesn't explain anything. You play as a little Playmobil girl called Laura, who finds a medallion in the attic. Her Grandpa tells her that the medallion belongs to a fairy and can be activated if she collects five gems. To do this, she has to perform good deeds for the people around her, carrying out mini-games along the way. Once the medallion is complete, Laura can travel through a secret door to the fairy cavern, where she has to free fairies being imprisoned there. It's a tough shift for Laura, basically. ■

FACT

One mission in the PC version has Laura resolving an argument between her parents. This was criticised at the time, with one educational software review site saying that shouldn't be a kid's job.

LE MANS 24 HOURS

Year 2000
Publisher Infogrames
Developer Velez & Dubail

KNOWN IN NORTH America as Test Drive Le Mans, this racing game is based on the famous 24 Hours of Le Mans endurance race. Naturally, a Game Boy Color's battery wouldn't last that long so instead players get to choose between a 4-lap, 24-lap or 100-lap race, paying attention to their tyres and fuel as they compete. If the idea of driving round a single track over and over again doesn't appeal to you, the game also has separate Arcade and Championship modes which include 10 other tracks from around the world. There are also 10 official cars in the game, covering such manufacturers as Marcos, Konrad, Chamberlain, Panoz, Audi, Toyota, BMW and Nissan. ■

FACT

The game has an imitation of the Nurburgring track, but it's instead called the Uberallesring, referring to the German national anthem lyrics 'Deutschland, Deutschland über alles'.

LEGEND OF THE RIVER KING GBC

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Natsume Tose

THIS UPDATED VERSION of Legend of the River King GB is essentially the same game but with a couple of little tweaks here and there. The most obvious difference is the addition of colour graphics, which is useful in case you were wondering what colour the water is (turns out it's blue). The colour version also adds a couple of bridges in some sections to make getting around easier, and includes six bonus fish species that weren't in the Game Boy version, meaning if you're a fan of blowfish, goby, black sea bream, sea bass, halfbeak and sand flounder (or maybe even all six) then this is the one to go for. It's the one to go for anyway, given its Game Boy support. ■

FACT

Both versions have a bonus lake at the end called Fun Lake, but in the Game Boy version any fish you catch there aren't recorded. They are in the Game Boy Color version.

LEGEND OF THE RIVER KING 2

Year Publisher Developer 2001 Natsume / Ubisoft Victor Interactive Software

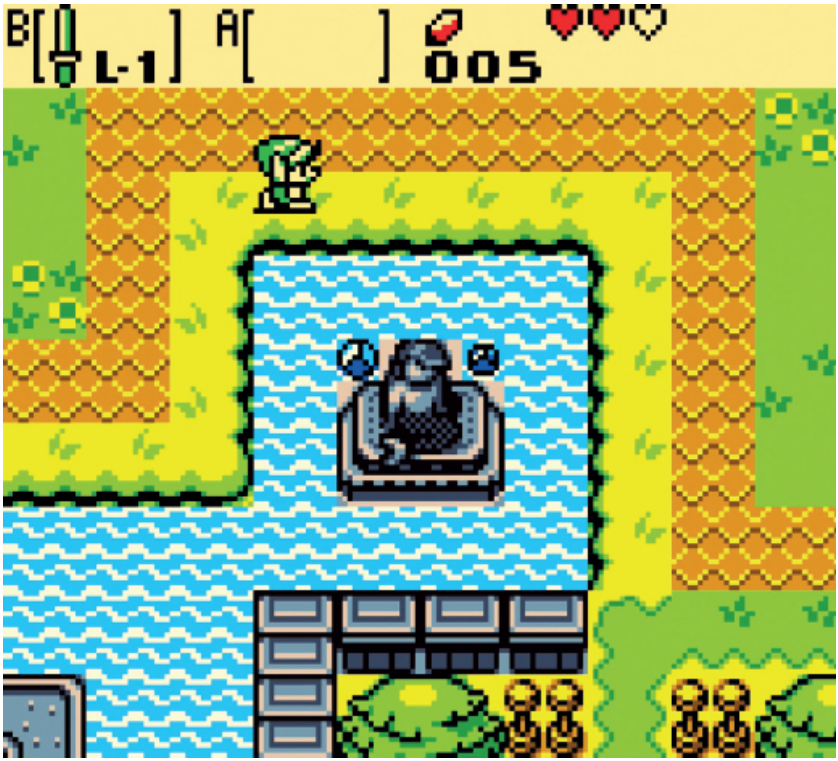
THE SEQUEL TO Legend of the River King has you taking on a new mission for a mysterious girl named Yuki. Yuki tells you that her Heaven Jewel has been split into two pieces, with one piece stolen by the Mountain God and the other pieces stolen by the River God. Rather conveniently, each one has transformed into a fish, so being something of a fishing expert it's your job to head off on a new adventure to track both gods' fishy forms down and catch them to retrieve the Heaven Jewel pieces. The game can connect to Natsume's other major Game Boy Color title at the time, Harvest Moon 2, allowing you to trade some flowers, bugs and fish with players of that game. ■

FACT

The Japanese version of the game came in a rumble-supported cartridge, but this was removed for the western release.

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: ORACLE OF AGES

Year Publisher Developer 2001 Nintendo Flagship



IT'S RARE THAT a team outside of Nintendo gets to work on a Zelda game, but Capcom subsidiary Flagship (which was co-funded by Nintendo, Capcom and Sega) got to do just that with not one, but two titles. Oracle of Ages and Oracle of Seasons were both released on the same day, and each offered an entirely different adventure running on the same engine. In Oracle of Ages, Link is sent to a new land called Labrynna where he meets Nayru, the titular Oracle of Ages. It's not long before Nayru is possessed by an evil sorceress called Veran, who uses Nayru's powers to travel back through time and start messing things up for the world. Link has to find the Harp of Ages in Nayru's house and use it to travel through time in search of the Essences of Time, which are needed to defeat Veran. Cue a journey across a large overworld with eight classic Zelda-style dungeons and more than its fair share of head-scratching puzzles. Although it's a perfectly entertaining standalone Zelda game, the main gimmick surrounding the Oracle games is that they can both link together. Once you've beaten one of the games, you'll get a password which can then be entered into the

other game. This then makes the second game serve as the continuation of the plot (rather than a separate adventure), and reveals an extra dungeon at the end where players can see the true ending. ■

FACT

According to the official Zelda timeline, Oracle of Ages takes place before Oracle of Seasons. In reality, playing either game first is a perfectly viable choice.

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: ORACLE OF SEASONS

Year Publisher Developer 2001 Nintendo Flagship

THE OTHER ORACLE game instead has Link travelling to the land of Holodrum, where he meets a group of travelling musicians led by their dancer Din. When the evil General Onox appears and kidnaps Din, it emerges that she's the Oracle of Seasons and has to be rescued before the climate goes all out of whack. While Oracle of Ages had Link using the Harp of Ages to travel through time, here the main item is the Rod of Seasons. This can be used to change the seasons and solve puzzles (such as turning from summer to winter to make a large tree's leaves fall off so you can reach the path they

were blocking). While Ages is more puzzlefocused, Seasons has more action. ■

FACT

Both Oracle games were added to the Game Boy catalogue on the Nintendo Switch Online subscription service in 2023, meaning you don't have to pay big bucks for either of them.

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: LINK'S AWAKENING DX

Year Publisher Developer 1998 Nintendo Nintendo

NINTENDO GAVE A handful of its original Game Boy games the 'DX' treatment, not only adding colour but also including some new features. Link's Awakening DX features two main additions, the first being a new photography side-quest in which a little mouse will take photos of Link at certain points in the game, which can then be printed out using the Game Boy Printer. The other main addition is an entirely new dungeon called the Color Dungeon, which is hidden in the cemetery. This dungeon focuses mainly on colour-based puzzles, which means that although Link's Awakening DX can still be played on the original Game Boy, the Color Dungeon can't be accessed. ■

FACT

When Link's Awakening was remade for the Switch the Color Dungeon was included, but all the colour elements were given shapes too so that colourblind players could still complete it.

LEGO ALPHA TEAM

Year 2000
Publisher Lego Media
Developer Climax Studios

ALPHA TEAM WAS a brand of Lego toys that was introduced in 2001 and focused on a group of secret agents and their battles against a nasty chap called Ogel who can turn people into skeleton drones. This Game Boy Color tie-in is a puzzle game which plays a bit like Dreamcast game Chu Chu Rocket. Ogel has captured five of the six Alpha Team members so you have to guide Dash through a series of stages, placing tiles on the floor to direct them where to go. There are more than 15 of these tiles and they change your character's direction, make them jump, fire laser beams and the like. As you rescue each Alpha Team member you can switch to them and use their unique abilities. ■

FACT

In case it hasn't clicked yet, the villain Ogel's name is Lego backwards. It's hardly Chaucer but come on, it's for kids.

LEGO ISLAND 2: THE BRICKSTER'S REVENGE

Year 2001
Publisher Lego Media
Developer Crawfish Interactive

THIS ADVENTURE GAME is the sequel to the PC-only Lego Island and has you playing as Pepper Roni, a pizza delivery boy who finds himself embroiled in a dangerous mission (well, as dangerous as a kid's game starring Lego characters can be). When Pepper is asked to deliver pizza to sneaky criminal the Brickster, it turns out it was a trick, with the crook using the situation to break out of prison. Pepper has to skate around three areas – Lego Island, Adventurer's Island and Ogel Island – in search of clues that will lead him to the Brickster's whereabouts. As well as the main mystery, players can also find trading cards of Lego characters, and use the GBC's infrared port to trade duplicates with other Lego Island 2 players. ■

FACT

A third game in the series, Island Xtreme Stunts, was released in 2002

and sees Pepper and the Brickster as the stars of an action movie being shot on Lego Island.

LEGO RACERS

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Lego Media Climax Studios

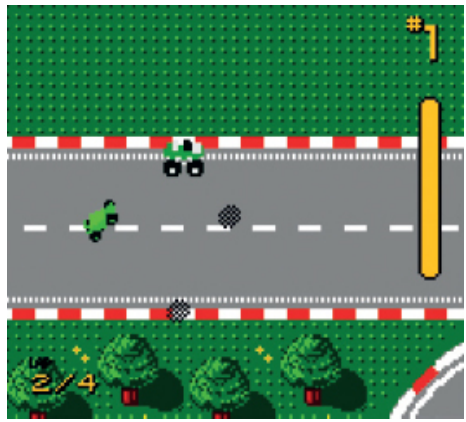
THE MAIN FOCUS for the first game in the Lego Racers series was the PC, PS1 and N64 versions, but the Game Boy Color version had a few quirks too. Players can create their own racer by swapping out different helmets, faces, torsos and legs, and can also make their own cars by selecting which bricks go in each section. Although such customisation is mainly limited to polygonal games, the GBC Lego Racers has a good attempt at reflecting the player's choices on screen. The game itself is a rather rudimentary kart racer with various power-ups dotted around the track that let you speed up, fire a shot at opponents or turn invulnerable for a brief moment. ■

FACT

In a weird quirk, the Build Menu music is missing some notes when you play the game on normal hardware, but when you play on an inaccurate emulator the music actually sounds correct.

LEGO STUNT RALLY

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Lego Media Graphic State Games



ALTHOUGH YOU'D BE forgiven for expecting Lego Stunt Rally to be another karting game like Lego Racers, it's actually more like a slot car racing toy (such as Scalextric in the UK). After choosing from the four characters on offer, you then take part in a race where you don't actually have control over your car's steering. Instead, it travels along a set path, and you control the acceleration by holding down and letting go of the A button. The key, as with slot car racing, is to carefully walk the line between slowing down at the turns to avoid shooting off the track, but maintaining enough speed to stay in front. Obstacles and power-ups occasionally appear, and you can press B to switch to a different slot. ■

FACT

The game also includes a rather complicated track builder mode, where you place track pieces on a large Lego base plate.

LEMMINGS & OH NO! MORE LEMMINGS

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Take Two Interactive J-Wing

RATHER THAN A straight port of the somewhat unwieldy Game Boy version of Lemmings, this is a completely new port by Japanese studio J-Wing. It's actually two games in one, consisting not only of the original game that was popular all around the world, but also the less groundbreaking follow-up Oh No! More Lemmings. As the name suggests, this was essentially more of the same, and would have been considered an expansion pack were it not the same size as the original game. This means the Game Boy Color port has significantly more stages than the version on the standard Game Boy, but the nature of the game means it's still a little tricky to play on a handheld with a low screen resolution. ■

FACT

The original Amiga game had a stage called 'Konbanwa, Lemming-san'. This remained intact in the Japanese GBC version, but the western translation team changed it to 'Hello, Mr Lemming'.

LIL' MONSTER

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Agetec KID

THE ENORMOUS SUCCESS of Pokémon meant imitators were always going to be inevitable, and Tokyo studio KID was keen for a piece of the Poképie. The game is set in a world with magical cans that people can place gems inside to spawn a little monster. These monsters can then be used to fight battles for you, using a card-based system which essentially randomises the attacks available to you to a degree. The story goes that the battling rules were set up by a chap called Hot Joe, but his brother Cool Joe keeps breaking the rules, so it's up to you to become the ultimate Gem Monster trainer and find out why. What's never made clear, however, is why their parents named them both Joe. ■

FACT

This is the second game in the series. The first, Kandume Monsters, was only released in Japan and is more like a Tamagotchi, meaning the series focused on two different crazes.

THE LION KING: SIMBA'S MIGHTY ADVENTURE

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Activision Torus Games

SIMBA'S MIGHTY ADVENTURE is a platformer that takes in the story of the original *Lion King* and its straight-to-video sequel, *The Lion King II: Simba's Pride*. The PlayStation version of the game was a 3D platformer, but the Game Boy Color version feels more like a sequel to the previous Lion King game, with many of the sprites, animations and gameplay mechanics carried over. Starting off as young Simba and eventually becoming an adult, you make your way through 10 stages, but the fight with Scar at the end of the first movie is on stage 6. There are then four more levels, culminating in a fight with Zira, queen of the Outlanders. You know, from the second movie. The one we've all seen. ■

FACT

In the second movie Zira doesn't actually fight Simba: she leaps at him but another lion jumps in the way and knocks her off a cliff. In the game, Simba fights her and knocks her off a bridge.

THE LITTLE MERMAID II: PINBALL FRENZY

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Nintendo Left Field Productions

IF YOU DON'T think The Little Mermaid is best represented by a pinball game then you frankly don't know the famous Walt Disney quote 'when you think about it, everything is pinball', which I just made up. The game contains two pinball tables: one based on Ariel, and one based on her daughter Melody from *The Little Mermaid II*. Each table has a bunch of mini-games based on the movies: Ariel's mini-games include rescuing Eric, recreating the 'Kiss the Girl' scene and defeating Ursula, while Melody's include saving villagers from a volcano, stealing a trident and defeating the evil Morgana. Once you find a mini-game during pinball play, it's then unlocked in a separate menu where you can play it whenever you like. ■

FACT

Once you beat Ursula or Morgana you have 15 seconds to lock the ball in the shipwreck or volcano: this launches a 3-ball multiball with improved target values, letting you rack up a huge score.

LITTLE NICKY

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Ubisoft Digital Eclipse

BASED ON NOBODY'S favourite Adam Sandler movie (and the only video game based on a live-action Sandler film), Little Nicky has you playing as the titular son of Satan as he travels to Earth to prevent his rebellious brothers Adrian and Cassius from creating a new Hell there. The game is a platformer consisting of 15 stages, taking in the likes of the New York subway and sewer systems, a mall and Central Park. In his normal state, Nicky is extremely slow, but the gimmick here is that fire – which would be deadly in any other platformer – works as a power-up for someone from Hell, meaning he can run quickly and occasionally burp flames. The game has a lot of edgy dialogue for the era and the platform. ■

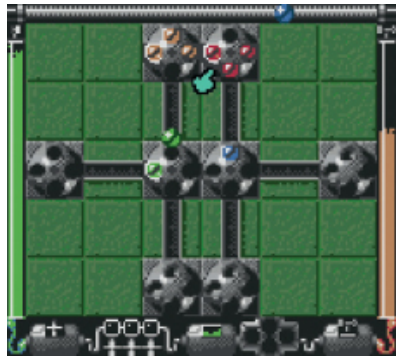
FACT

While *Billy Madison*, *Happy Gilmore*, *The Waterboy* and *Big Daddy* were successful, *Little Nicky* was Sandler's first co-written post-SNL bomb, grossing $58 million with an $80 million budget.

LOGICAL

Year Publisher Developer

1999 THQ / Sunsoft
Conspiracy Entertainment



THIS UNIQUE PUZZLE game consists of 99 stages, each containing different layouts of pipes and gears. Each gear has four little receptacles that hold marbles, and in each stage marbles roll across the top of the stage and drop into them. If you can get four marbles of the same colour into a single gear, it will explode and leave a mark. To clear each stage, you have to mark every gear. As well as rotating the gears you can also send marbles along the pipes to other gears, meaning the game is about moving the marbles around the stage while keeping an eye on what's coming. Later stages complicate things with traffic lights (which demand specific colours in each gear's slots) and gates that only let certain marble colours through. ■

FACT

The game's vowelless passwords have no rhyme or reason. Some appear to be computer related (SFTWR, WNDW), some are just the same letter repeated (FFFFF) and level 22's is just T.

LOONEY TUNES

Year 1999
Publisher Sunsoft
Developer Sunsoft

THIS IS A Game Boy Color version of the Looney Tunes game released by Sunsoft for the original Game Boy in 1992. In terms of actual gameplay the two versions are practically identical: other than the obvious addition of colour graphics the GBC version features exactly the same sprites and the same soundtrack. The main addition here is the inclusion of brief mini-games which take place in between each stage. While these are hardly ground-breaking – there are variations on gemcollecting stages, slot machines and the ubiquitous card-matching game – they do at least add some variety to proceedings, and because it's compatible with the original Game Boy it renders the 1992 release obsolete to some extent. ■

FACT

In false memory studies conducted in 2002 and 2004, subjects were given false ads about Bugs Bunny being at Disneyland. Up to 16% of them then wrongly claimed they had met him there.

LOONEY TUNES: CARROT CRAZY

Year Publisher Developer 1998 Infogrames Bit Managers

KNOWN IN EUROPE as Bugs Bunny & Lola Bunny: Operation Carrot Patch, this action platformer follows Bugs and Lola as they try to investigate who's responsible for completely emptying their precious carrot patch at home. Their travels take them to a film studio, where they have to explore five film sets and defeat their bosses – Yosemite Sam in Treasure Island, Daffy Duck in 'Crazy Town', Taz at the zoo, Marvin the Martian at a space station and Elmer Fudd in a forest – to get their veggies back. Bugs and Lola each have their own unique skills: the former can push heavy items and dig holes underground, while the latter can use an umbrella to slowly float down from jumps. ■

FACT

Lola made her debut in the movie *Space Jam* and has become a regular fixture in the Looney Tunes universe since then.

LOONEY TUNES COLLECTOR: ALERT!

Year	*Publisher*	*Developer*	
2000	Infogrames	Infogrames	

MARVIN THE MARTIAN'S dog K-9 was trying to be a faithful companion by cleaning up his master's spaceship, but ended up accidentally throwing out all the Instant Martians he needs to conquer the Earth, as well as his teleporter. Overhearing the subsequent argument, Bugs decides to round up all his Looney Tunes pals and collect all the broken pieces of the teleporter (defeating the Instant Martians along the way) so they can send Marvin and K-9 back to space. There are around 15 playable characters to find and recruit – from big hitters like Daffy, Elmer Fudd and Foghorn Leghorn to less popular ones like Marc Anthony (not the singer) and Papa Bear (not Nicki Minaj's son) – along with a further 30 or so you can collect and trade Pokémon-style. ■

FACT

The EU version is the one to get, because the North American version has an issue with a cornfield area which makes 100% completion impossible.

LOONEY TUNES: MARVIN STRIKES BACK!

Year 2000
Publisher Infogrames
Developer Infogrames

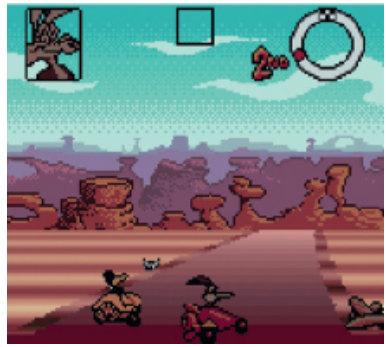
MADE CLEARER BY its North American title Looney Tunes Collector: Martian Revenge!, this is the sequel to Martian Alert and this time switches the story around by putting you in control of Marvin instead. Licking his wounds after the events of the first game, Marvin is watching Earth TV and sees the Looney Tunes making fun of him. Enraged, Marvin and K-9 head off to Earth to get revenge. Given that its predecessor's main gimmick is the ability to collect other Looney Tunes characters and use their abilities, this is carried over here (with the twist being that this time Marvin is capturing them). While the first game was praised, the sequel was less fondly received due to its reuse of various ideas and assets. ■

FACT

Marvin was initially created to be a Bugs Bunny villain who was the opposite of Yosemite Sam. Sam is hotheaded and stupid, while Marvin is quiet and softspoken but dangerously clever.

LOONEY TUNES RACING

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Infogrames Xantera



THIS RACING GAME has you trying to win the three Looney Tunes Championship Cups with your character of choice. There are initially four playable characters – Bugs Bunny, Lola Bunny, Daffy Duck and Wile E. Coyote – and by completing races and earning tokens you can unlock a further four: Foghorn Leghorn, Marvin the Martian, Taz and Yosemite Sam. The game was also released on the PlayStation, and while that version feels more like a modern karting game the GBC version's wide roads and 2D visuals make it feel more like an 'endless' driving game like Out Run. Naturally, weapons can be collected (made by ACME, no less), including a speed boost rocket, a giant magnet that slows down enemies, and a custard pie with a homing missile inside it. ■

FACT

Early character sketches of Wile E. Coyote from the 1940s show that he was originally going to be called Don Coyote, a pun on the epic Spanish novel Don Quixote.

LOONEY TUNES: TWOUBLE!

Year 1998
Publisher Infogrames
Developer Bit Managers

KNOWN IN EUROPE by the more descriptive title Sylvester & Tweety: Breakfast on the Run, this is an interesting Looney Tunes game that feels distinctly more European than the other offerings on the Game Boy Color. Playing as Sylvester, your aim (as always) is to chase and catch Tweety, but this time the game it's a straightforward platformer as you may expect from similar releases. Instead, it's a mixture between conventional 2D platforming stages and isometric 3D stages, similar to European-developed computer and console games like Head Over Heels or (if you're looking for a Game Boy comparison) Monster Max. These sections have a much greater emphasis on puzzle-solving, and have Sylvester collecting and using items to help him get through each room. ■

FACT

In his first cartoon, Sylvester was called Thomas. Once it was realised that this clashed with Tom & Jerry he was renamed Sylvester after the scientific name for the European wildcat, Felis Silvestris.

LUCKY LUKE

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Infogrames Infogrames

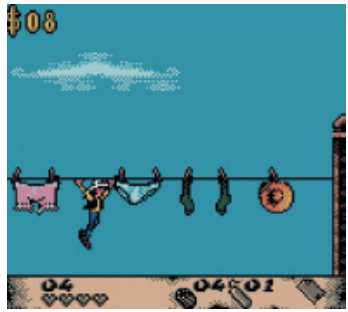
THE ORIGINAL GAME Boy release of Lucky Luke was only released in Europe, meaning North American players missed out on the ability to play as the plucky gunslinger from the Belgian comic strip of the same name. When the game was re-released on the Game Boy Color, however, it finally got the North American version that wasn't on offer the first time around. If you've been reading through this book in order, this is usually the part where I say that both versions look identical but there are some extra features of some sort in the Game Boy Color version. That really isn't the case this time: other than monochrome versus colour visuals, both games are practically like-for-like. ■

FACT

Almost every Lucky Luke story ends with a single panel of him riding into the sunset singing 'I'm a poor lonesome cowboy, and a long way from home'. The game's manual ends with this panel.

LUCKY LUKE: DESPERADO TRAIN

Year	*Publisher*	*Developer*
2000	Infogrames	Infogrames



SORRY, NORTH AMERICAN players, but your luck with Lucky Luke would last just one game before its Game Boy Color sequel would once again become a Europe-only release. This time Luke has to stop a runaway train that's been stolen by – you guessed it – some desperadoes (the Dalton gang, in this case). Starting off at Notting Gulch, Luke has to travel to various locations, taking on various tasks along the way such as pulling a lever at a drawbridge, bringing an escaped lion back to his cage at the circus and helping a steam boat win a race. All of which admittedly sound like distractions, a suspicion not helped by the numerous mini-games including playing horseshoes with Luke's horse Jolly Jumper. ■

FACT

The final level can be completed in a matter of seconds: Luke has to simply grab a metal pole at the front of the speeding train and place it on a large flashing arrow to stop it.

LUFIA: THE LEGEND RETURNS

Year 2001
Publisher Natsume / Ubisoft
Developer Neverland

THE FIRST TWO games in the Lufia series were released on the SNES, and this Game Boy Color title is the third entry. It takes place 100 years after the events of the first game and has you playing as Wain, a teenager who's a descendant of the legendary hero Maxim. When evil goings-on start happening at the suspiciously-named Tower of Death, Wain and a fortune teller called Seena head over to investigate. Like its predecessors, The Legend Returns is part RPG, part dungeon-crawler, but the game's main twist is the fact that its battle system supports up to nine party members, who you can arrange in a 9x9 grid to affect their power and defence stats. ■

FACT

The game was originally planned for the PlayStation under the name Lufia 3: Ruins Chasers. When its publisher went bankrupt it was scrapped, until Natsume picked it up and it became a GBC game.

M&M'S MINI MADNESS

Year 2000
Publisher Majesco / JoWooD Productions
Developer Pipe Dream Interactive

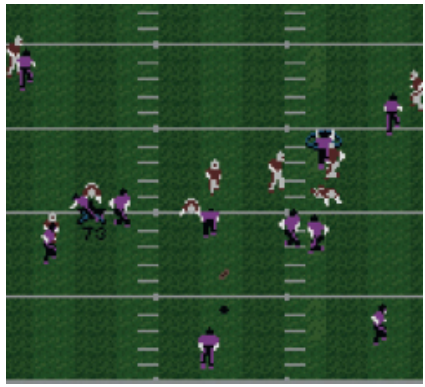
WHEN MARS RELEASED its new M&M's Minis in the late '90s, it created a bunch of new characters called the Minis, who would appear in ads much like the main talking M&M's characters. In this video game spinoff, you play as the main M&M's as they try to get their chocolate factory back from the Minis, who've taken over its central computer and are causing anarchy. There are four main 'worlds' – the warehouse, the conveyors, the mixing room and the central computer itself – and you can swap between the four M&M's at any time, using their unique skills. Red, for example, has a spin move that knocks away enemies, while Yellow has a special jump that triggers certain springy surfaces. ■

FACT

When Mars refused a request to feature M&M's in Steven Spielberg's movie *E.T.*, Hershey agreed to let its Reese's Pieces be used instead, and its sales leapt by up to 300%.

MADDEN NFL 2000

Year Publisher Developer 1999 THQ / EA Sports Tiertex



WHEN RELEASING ITS first Madden title for the Game Boy Color, EA Sports and THQ took a leaf out of other developers' books and repurposed an old game. Specifically, Madden NFL 2000 looks exactly like the last Game Boy title, Madden 97, with the same sprites and the same user interface (although the frame rate has been improved somewhat). The similarities only really extend to the on-the-field gameplay, however, because in terms of the menu screens the game looks completely different. The feature set is similar, mind you: you can play Exhibition, Season or Playoffs modes with all the officially licensed NFL teams, and because the game still doesn't have the NFLPA licence all the players are only represented by their numbers. ■

FACT

Think of the nastiest thing you can. Now Google the cover of Madden NFL 2000, and feel ashamed as you see John Madden sternly telling you that you're out of line.

MADDEN NFL 2001

Year 2000
Publisher EA Sports
Developer 3d6 Games

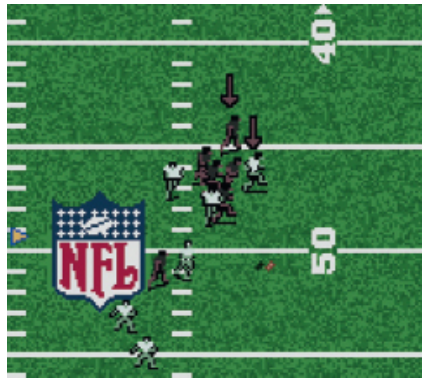
PRESUMABLY AWARE THAT it couldn't keep dining out on the same Madden 97 gameplay, EA turned to new developer 3d6 Games for the 2001 edition of Madden on the Game Boy Color. Ditching the cross-compatibility with the original Game Boy, Madden NFL 2001 is a much faster and smoother game than its predecessor, and generally feels a lot more responsive to play as a result. Player names are still represented by numbers and there aren't many new features, but the refreshed gameplay alone means that the 2001 entry doesn't feel like a barely modified copy-and-paste job. One main new addition that it does boast, however, is a new Link Play mode in which two players can compete against each other, something the 2000 edition didn't have. ■

FACT

3d6 Games released eight games over the course of its life, all of which were on Game Boy Color and Game Boy Advance. Two more games, Rocket Dog and Slider, were never completed.

MADDEN NFL 2002

Year 2001
Publisher EA Sports
Developer 3d6 Games



BY THE TIME the 2002 version of Madden rolled around the Game Boy Advance was out and EA was focusing more on hitting the ground running with Nintendo's shiny new handheld. As a result, Game Boy Color players found themselves back in the world of rehashes, with Madden NFL 2002 being a barely refreshed version of Madden NFL 2001. The teams and stats have been updated to reflect the new season, but other than that it's practically the same game with the same modes, the same list of plays and the same gameplay. Basically, you can tell when a game doesn't do anything new when the features listed on the back of the box were all in the previous year's entry. ■

FACT

The game's cover features Minnesota Vikings QB Daunte Culpepper. Fans believed he was a victim of the 'Madden Curse', because he had his worst season to date after appearing on the cover.

MAGI NATION

Year 2001
Publisher Interactive Imagination
Developer Interactive Imagination

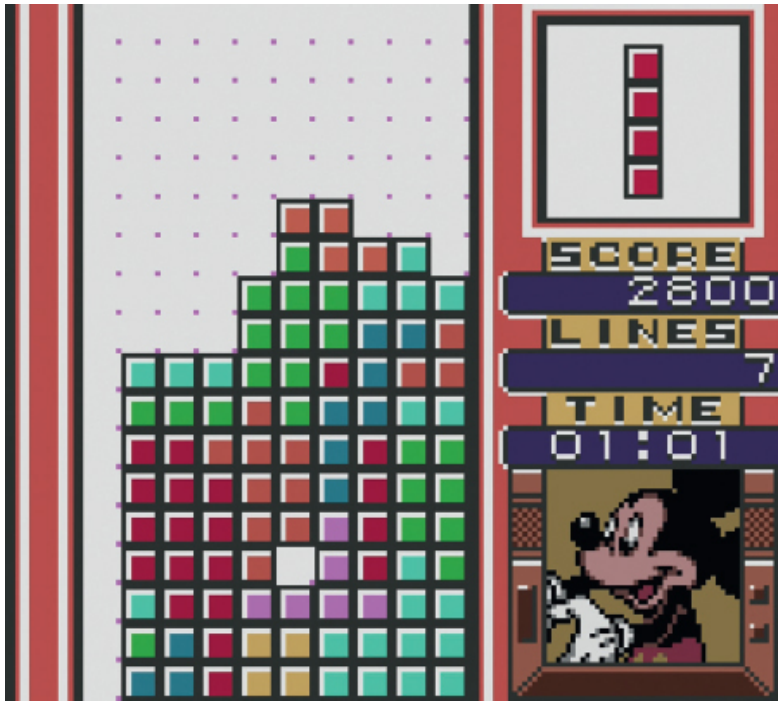
BASED ON A collectible card game called Magi Nation Duel, this RPG puts you in the shoes of Tony Jones, a young teenage lad who moves to a new town and is dared by the local kids to enter a cave, but ends up falling down a hole and ending up in a strange world. It turns out Tony is the Magus Kyros, a hero prophesied to save the world in its time of need, which is news to him. As is the post-Pokémon way, part of the game involves fighting dream creatures, who can then be collected and turned into rings containing their essence, allowing you to summon them. The battle system is unique in that every creature you summon takes away from Tony's energy.

FACT

An animated series based on Magi Nation was released in 2007 by Canadian media company Cookie Jar, and lasted two seasons before it was cancelled.

MAGICAL TETRIS CHALLENGE

Year 2000
Publisher Capcom / Activision
Developer Capcom



ALTHOUGH CAPCOM RELEASED Magical Tetris Challenge on the Nintendo 64 and PlayStation, the Game Boy Color version was an entirely different game, to the extent that some believe it's the best of the bunch. For starters, it features the three main game types that are included in the console versions: Classic Tetris is your typical single-player Marathon mode, Updown Tetris is a straightforward two-player battle mode and Magical Tetris is a more complicated battle mode where players can spawn 'magical pieces' which can in turn send large blocks up to 5x5 in size to their opponents. The Game Boy Color version, however, also has its own bespoke Quest mode, where Mickey's village is holding its annual Tetris Carnival and everyone's trying to collect as many coins as they can, with the winner getting to be Mayor for the day. This mode introduces some entirely new modes exclusive to the Game Boy Color, such as Signal Tetris, where a row of 10 'signal' colours are shown at the bottom of the screen and you have to clear lines by placing down pieces in specific places in order to match the colours. There's also Tower Tetris, where you have a large tower of garbage blocks and have to work your way down, clearing them all, until you reach a Key Block

at the bottom. Add to this the Target Tetris puzzle mode (where you have a set number of moves to clear a screen) and the co-op Harmony Tetris mode and there's a lot to see in this one. ■

FACT

Every character has their own reason for winning the contest. Pete wants to cause chaos, Mickey wants to stop Pete, Minnie wants to lead a parade, Donald wants to sing in a concert and Goofy wants to set up a field-ploughing festival.

MAGICAL DROP

Year 2000
Publisher Classified Games
Developer Conspiracy Entertainment

THE MAGICAL DROP series started in 1995 and enjoyed some success both in arcades and on home consoles, even though its gameplay is rather basic. The aim is to clear a constantly descending stack of coloured bubbles by sucking bubbles up from the stack then firing them back into it. When you match three bubbles of the same colour in a vertical stack they'll disappear, and if there are any others of the same colour touching them from the

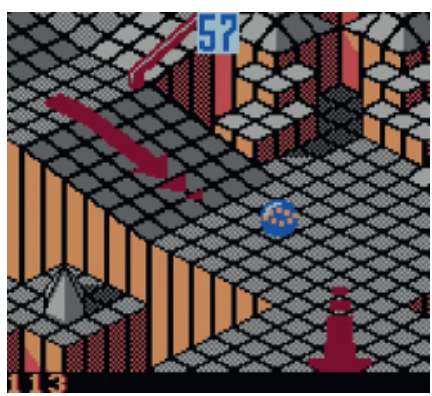
side they'll disappear with them. The Game Boy Color version is based on Magical Drop III, containing some of the new characters that were introduced in that game. It's missing its Story mode, however, meaning all that's on offer here is an Endless mode. ■

FACT

This is the only game in the entire Magical Drop series that was never released in Japan.

MARBLE MADNESS

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Midway Digital Eclipse



WHEN A GAME is available on both the Game Boy and the Game Boy Color it stands to reason that you would expect the latter version to be the superior one. Marble Madness, however, is one of the rare examples of a game whose 1991 Game Boy version is arguably better than the Game Boy Color game that was released eight years later. The game follows the same structure and features the same option to play with the controls set to 45° or 90° angles. The marble's physics are far lighter, however, and some of the diagonal sections don't line up perfectly with the controls, meaning you can find yourself bumping into the walls on straightforward 45°

paths. It's also missing the Game Boy version's twoplayer mode. ■

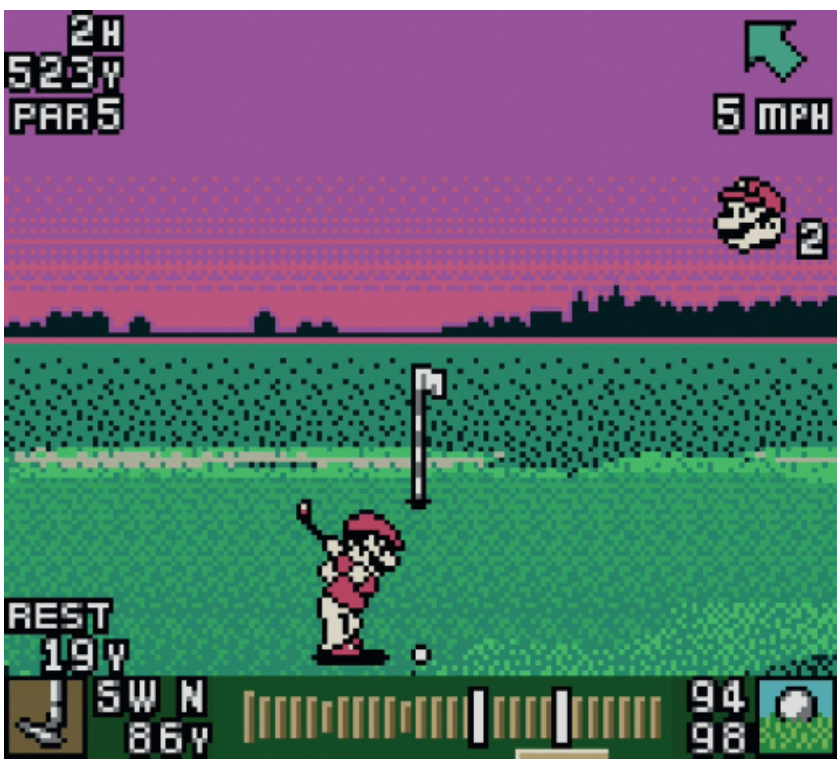
FACT

There is actually a twoplayer mode hidden in the game's code, but it was never finished, meaning it was planned at one point and scrapped.

MARIO GOLF

Year Publisher Developer

1999 Nintendo Camelot Software Planning



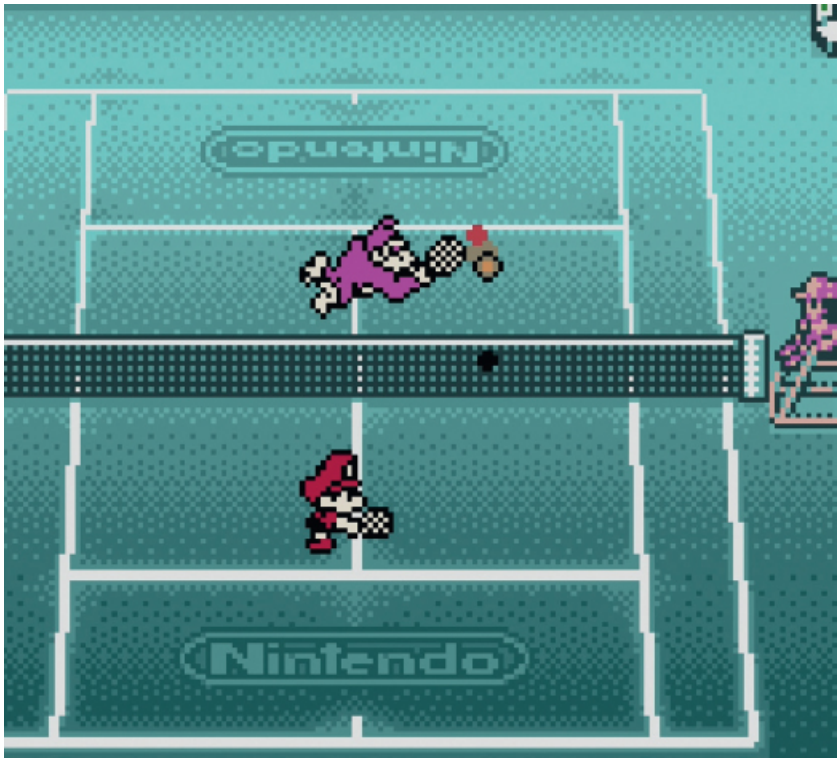
RELEASED JUST A few months after the Nintendo 64 game of the same name, Mario Golf on the Game Boy Color is both a companion piece to the console version and a standalone game in its own right. Gameplay is somewhat restrained for a franchise known for its spectacle and power-ups, with developer Camelot focusing on providing a solid, enjoyable golf game first and foremost, rather than a zany Mario game with golf rules shoehorned in. Perhaps unusually for a game with Mario's name in the title, the handheld version of Mario Golf doesn't actually feature a wide selection of Mario characters: whereas the N64 version offers nine players from the Mario universe once everyone's unlocked, here only Mario and Luigi are playable from the start, and Wario is the only other character from the series who's unlockable. Instead, the rest of the roster is made up of original human characters. The GBC version also features a unique Story mode, which is an RPG-lite adventure where you choose one of four other humans – Kid, Sherry, Joe or Azalea – and take them through a series of tournaments, levelling up their stats over time. Using a Transfer Pak, you can then copy these characters to the N64 version of Mario Golf and play as them on your console. Camelot's insistence on focusing on gameplay first and the Mario branding second means Mario Golf is widely agreed to be the best golf game on the Game Boy Color, and one of the best Mario sports games ever. ■

FACT

The game had a TV ad in which Mario is voiced by Charles Martinet. He recorded both the English language and Latin American versions of the ad, marking the first time Mario speaks Spanish.

MARIO TENNIS

Year 2001
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Camelot Software Planning



A YEAR AFTER the release of Mario Golf, Nintendo and Camelot decided to do the same thing with tennis. Once again there was a Nintendo 64 version released first, followed by a Game Boy Color version a few months later which offered its own standalone modes, a different roster and Transfer Pak capabilities. As with Mario Golf, there's a GBC-exclusive Story mode here, called Mario Tour, where you play as youngsters Alex or Nina and help them go up the ranks at the Royal Academy, building their stats along the way. Outside of this mode, the game's roster again consists of a mix of human and Mario characters, though there are at least more of the latter this time: Luigi, Donkey Kong and Baby Mario are available from the start, while Mario and Peach can be unlocked. What's more, the Transfer Pak functionality works both ways this time, meaning you can not only unlock some of the human characters in the N64 version of the game, but can also unlock some more Mario characters – Yoshi, Wario, Waluigi and Bowser – in the GBC version, along with their own exclusive mini-games. While later Mario Tennis games would throw in power-ups and the like,

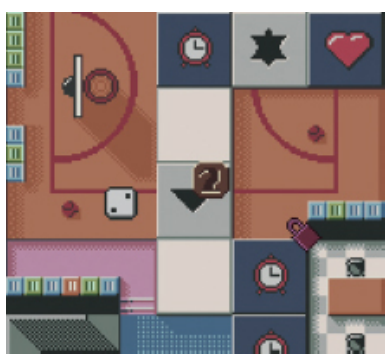
Camelot took the same route here as it did with Mario Golf and focused purely on the core gameplay, meaning that if you were to strip away all the Mario branding it would still be a fantastic tennis game. ■

FACT

Camelot wanted to create girlfriend characters for Wario and Waluigi so they could be doubles partners in the N64 version, but Shigeru Miyamoto said he didn't even want to look at their designs.

MARY-KATE & ASHLEY: CRUSH COURSE

Year 2001
Publisher Acclaim
Developer Crawfish Interactive



DURING THE HEIGHT of their popularity among the 'tween' girl demographic, the Game Boy Color got no fewer than five games starring the Olsen Twins (we'll get to the fifth one later). Crush Course is a board game in which the focus is to earn hearts to win over your crush. There are three boards to choose from, based on school, the mall and the park, and each can be played by up to four players. As is the video board game way, some squares trigger one of 15 mini-games. If you land on a heart square you also get a timing-based mini-game where you have to stop the cursor on your

crush or risk losing hearts. It's all serious business. ■

FACT

The manual says the aim of the game is to 'show the boys just how smart you are'. Because stomping round a mall one tile at a time is proper genius behaviour.

MARY-KATE & ASHLEY: GET A CLUE

Year 2000
Publisher Acclaim
Developer Crawfish Interactive

THIS IS THE second of two similar Olsen Twins games (the first being The New Adventures of Mary-Kate & Ashley, later in this book). As in its predecessor, Get a Clue has the twins running the Olsen & Olsen Detective Agency, as they take on five more cases to solve. The twins have to find out who's stolen a ballet dancer's tiara, figure out why a mummy's seemingly come to life at the museum, stop someone sabotaging their favourite band's concerts, solve the mystery of a green ghost haunting a nearby mansion, and finally recover missing items at a summer camp to clear their own names. Gameplay is practically identical to the first game, so look that up for more details. ■

FACT

The twins first starred in *The Adventures of Mary-Kate & Ashley* when they were just eight. In these games, they're 14, hence 'The New Adventures'.

MARY-KATE & ASHLEY: POCKET PLANNER

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Acclaim Powerhead Games

IF YOU'VE EVER wanted your own digital personal organiser with low-res photos of the Olsen Twins in it, then first of all what's wrong with you, and secondly here it is. After asking a bunch of questions – though not as many as E.T. The Digital Companion – you're given access to a phone book, an 'email' system (where you can send messages to friends who also have the game) and various mini-games. These include basic item-catching game Drop to Shop, a virtual pet of the girls' dog Clue, a Magic 8-Ball feature called Ask Ashley and the most 13-yearold girl thing ever, the Mary-Kate Crush Indicator, in which you hold your GBC up to a boy you like and press a 'Scan' button to see if they're your crush. ■

FACT

The game actually lets you call numbers from your phone book using a touchtone phone. After holding your GBC speaker to the handset, the tones sound out and the phone dials.

MARY-KATE & ASHLEY: WINNERS CIRCLE

Year Publisher Developer 2001 Acclaim M4 Limited

THE OLSEN TWINS don't just like solving mysteries, running around board games eyeing up boys and appearing in people's personal organisers. They also like riding horses, hence this showjumping game. After choosing a girl and picking the colours for her outfit, you get to choose from four horses with varying levels of speed, agility, height and temperament. The aim is to take part in a series of tournaments and clear the jump-filled courses as quickly as possible with as few errors as you can. Winning tournaments will unlock four more horses, including one made entirely of chrome who melts the jumps with its fire breath. Okay, I made that up, they're all normal horses. ■

FACT

The whole horse-riding thing isn't just an attempt to appeal to young girls. Mary- Kate Olsen continues to take part in showjumping and won her first international contest in 2019.

THE MASK OF ZORRO

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Sunsoft / Ubisoft Saffire

BASED ON THE 1998 movie starring Antonio Banderas and Catherine Zeta-Jones, The Mask of Zorro puts you in the all-black costume of the 1800s swashbuckler as he makes his way through 30 stages of running, jumping and swordfighting. On paper it should be prime material for a video game, with lots of dramatic action scenes, but critics roundly panned the game, with IGN giving it a score of 2/10. This was down to a number of factors: the platforming gameplay was criticised for being inaccurate and leading to too many frustrating falls, while fencing enemies was considered too difficult, especially later in the game where enemies appear nearly invincible at times. It was less ‘Z’ and more ‘zzz’ then.

FACT

The movie was going to be directed by Robert Rodriguez but he wanted to make it a lot more violent so the studio instead went with Martin Campbell, who had directed *GoldenEye*.

MAT HOFFMAN’S PRO BMX

Year Publisher Developer 2001 Activision HotGen

WHILE THE PLAYSTATION version of Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX is a modified version of the Tony Hawk game engine, the Game Boy Color version instead uses the same engine as Activision's previous GBC release Road Champs: BXS Stunt Biking. After choosing to play as either Hoffman or one of seven other real-life pros, you have to ride your way around seven different locations – from the Hoffman Bike Factory to a dockyard in Rotterdam – pulling off tricks and ticking off specific tasks. The game has a training mode and it's certainly recommended, because the switch from the PlayStation version's over-the-shoulder view to a sideon perspective completely changes the gameplay and its complex trick system requires some practice. ■

FACT

In 1993, Hoffman was the first person to ride a 'big' 24-foot ramp, and during one run tore his spleen. He would have died had he not been immediately rushed to hospital.

MATCHBOX CATERPILLAR CONSTRUCTION ZONE

Year Publisher Developer

2000 Mattel Interactive
Realtime Associates

ORIGINALLY RELEASED ON the PC, Construction Zone consists of 26 different stages set in the outskirts, a farm, a forest, a suburban neighbourhood and a city. Each area has a number of tasks that need to be carried out, which is where your fleet of 11 heavy-duty Caterpillar vehicles comes into play. Playing as the leader of the CAT team, you have to jump from vehicle to vehicle, making use of their unique functions to carry out each task while little toy Matchbox guys tell you where to go. Some of these vehicles have different types of lifting function (a blade, a forklift, a lifting chain and so on), while others have more specific abilities, such as paving a road, harvesting crops or dumping contents. ■

FACT

The PC version actually came with a huge set of levers that could be placed over your keyboard, making it feel like you were really controlling each vehicle.

MATCHBOX EMERGENCY PATROL

Year Publisher Developer

2001 THQ Lucky Chicken
Games

WHAT IF THE original Grand Theft Auto had been aimed at younger players and had you playing as a good guy instead of a criminal? The result may have been something like Matchbox Emergency Patrol, a top-down open world game where you run around a city, taking on missions to make things safer for everyone. There are six mission types in the game, three as a police officer (chasing speeding cars, rounding up fleeing criminals and patrolling the area) and three as a firefighter (putting out flames, following the fire chief's car and, again, patrolling the area). Your job takes you through seven different areas: the suburbs, the industrial sector, a forest, a harbour, the snowy mountains, a farm and downtown. ■

FACT

Matchbox die-cast cars were introduced in the UK in 1953, and have been hugely popular ever since. In 1997, the brand was bought by Mattel, which also owns Hot Wheels.

DIE MAUS

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Infogrames Bit Managers

IN CASE YOU don't remember this from the Game Boy section of the book, Die Maus is an isometric puzzle platformer based on the German TV series *Die Sendung mit der Maus*. Two years after the game came to the standard Game Boy, this colourised version was released for the Game Boy Color. Whereas some other Game Boy to Game Boy Color conversions added extra features like bonus stages or the like, this isn't the case with Die Maus: it's practically the exact same game, with added colour. That's not to say the game doesn't benefit from the addition of colour, of course: for example, both games have rivers that can kill you, but these looked like paths in the original game because they weren't blue. ■

FACT

The show was considered controversial when it first aired in 1971, because West German law said that it was illegal for children aged under 6 years old to watch television.

DIE MAUS: VERRUECKTE OLYMPIADE

Year 2001 *Publisher* Infogrames *Developer* Neon Studios

IF AN ISOMETRIC platformer starring Die Maus and his friends isn't your glass of Apfelschorle, you may be more interested in this multievent sports game (the title translates to The Mouse: Crazy Olympics). There are six events here, split into two separate three-event series, and as befits the 'Crazy' moniker, none of them are based on standard Olympic disciplines. The Maushaus event, for example, has you wandering around a large Greek building, stepping on switches to light flames, while the Regenregatta event is set in England and has the mouse and the elephant making their way through a flooded British town on a big red rubber dinghy. It's a short game, but it's only in German so you may have to figure it out as you go along. ■

FACT

The three main characters were designed to be the opposite sizes than they are in real life, so the mouse is the tallest, then the duck, then the elephant is the smallest.

MAYA THE BEE & HER FRIENDS

Year 1999
Publisher Acclaim
Developer Crawfish Interactive

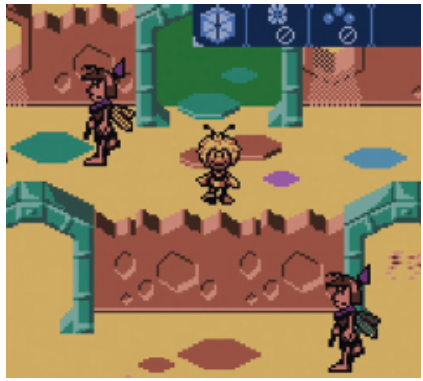
THIS PUZZLE PLATFORMER is based on yet another German IP: in this case, a 1912 children's book which was later adapted into movies and TV shows. 120 of Maya's insect friends are stuck behind spiderwebs, so it's up to Maya and her chums Flip (a grasshopper) and Willy (another bee) to rescue them. Each of the three characters has different abilities: Maya can pull levers, Willy can be picked up and thrown at enemies, and Flip can jump higher than the others and can also be leapt on for extra height. The game was actually split into two and reskinned in the US, as The New Adventures of Mary-Kate & Ashley and its sequel Mary-Kate & Ashley: Get a Clue (which is why both games feel so similar). ■

FACT

The game's code contains a single unused sprite of Itchy from *The Simpsons*, implying Crawfish may have been planning a Simpsons game before turning to *Maya the Bee* instead.

MAYA THE BEE: GARDEN ADVENTURES

Year 2000 *Publisher* Acclaim *Developer* Neon Software



THE SECOND TITLE based on *Maya the Bee* is an adventure game in which Maya's friend Willy has been kidnapped by the bees' sworn enemies, the hornets. The hornets say they won't release Willy until they're presented with some honey, so off Maya goes to get the honey and rescue her friend. Maya has to explore a variety of locations, solving puzzles along the way, until she can eventually infiltrate the hornets' nest and find Willy. The game is aimed at younger audiences, but because of this some critics complained that it was far too easy as a result, with a question mark appearing any time Maya comes across something important that's needed to make progress. ■

FACT

One of the most popular adaptations of the book is *Maya the Honey Bee*, a Japanese anime series that ran for 52 episodes in 1975.

MEGA MAN XTREME

Year 2001
Publisher Capcom
Developer Capcom

AS COVERED IN the previous section of this book, the five Mega Man titles on the standard Game Boy were sort of handheld reinterpretations of the main NES series. In a similar way, Mega Man Xtreme is a spin-off of the Mega Man X series on the NES, using many of the same characters but in a different way. The game's plot is slightly meta, in that the world's Mother Computer has been hacked into by a group called the Shadow Hunters, and our hero X has found himself in a simulation of the first stage from the SNES game. Realising that the hack has released digital versions of the Mavericks (the bosses from Mega Man X and X2) and that their presence in the Mother Computer could send the world into chaos, X enters the computer to defeat the virtual villains. This is a convenient excuse to bring back eight bosses from the first two Mega Man X games – Chill Penguin, Spark Mandrill, Storm Eagle, Flame Stag, Wheel Gator, Magna Centipede, Armored Armadillo and Morph Moth – and place them in recreations of their original stages (thereby giving Capcom carte blanche to make some tweaks in each level, because hey, it's a simulation, not the real thing). In

typical Mega Man style, defeating each Maverick earns you their unique weapon, which tends to be more powerful against certain other Mavericks. There are three difficulties: Normal mode only features the first four Mavericks, Hard mode features a different four, and Xtreme mode combines all eight. ■

FACT

The first boss, Vile, is known as Vava in Japan. The western version of Mega Man Xtreme accidentally calls him Vava, though, so I guess that's his name now.

MEGA MAN XTREME 2

Year 2001 *Publisher* Capcom *Developer* Capcom

EYEBROWS ARE RAISED when Reploids (robots like X) around the world start having their programming wiped in an event called the 'Erasure'. X and Zero are sent to find out what's going on, and before long they come face-to-face with resurrected versions of some of the Mavericks defeated by X in the past. This time the eight bosses are a selection from Mega Man X, X2 and X3, but there's more of a focus on original content. The most obvious example of this is the replacement of the Normal and Hard modes with X

Mission and Zero Mission modes: in the former, X fights one set of four bosses, while in the latter players get to control Zero and fight the other four. ■

FACT

Beat both modes and you'll get Extreme mode again, where you can switch between X and Zero as you take on all eight bosses. The twist is that the boss's weapon only goes to whoever kills them.

MEN IN BLACK: THE SERIES

Year 1998
Publisher Crave Entertainment
Developer Tiertex

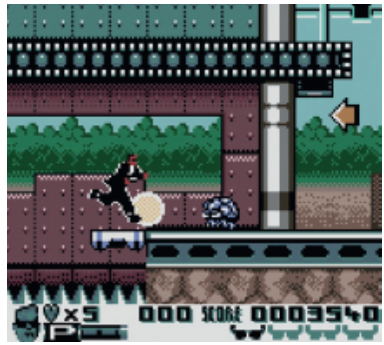
WHY GET A video game based on the Will Smith and Tommy Lee Jones movie *Men in Black* when you can get one based on its alternate timeline animated series instead? Don't answer that: move on. This action platformer's rather vague storyline has you playing as Agent J (Smith's character in the film) as he, to coin a phrase, protects the Earth from the scum of the universe. J is armed with a pistol and can perform a rather cool (if inaccurate) move where he shoots loads of times in a big arc over his head. Other than that, however, the game is rather by-the-books, as best illustrated by the fact that the best advice the manual can muster is 'keep moving and stop the aliens before they stop you'. ■

FACT

The game's data includes every track from the Super Game Boy version of A Bug's Life, perhaps as placeholders for a planned enhanced SGB soundtrack that didn't happen.

MEN IN BLACK 2: THE SERIES

Year 2000
Publisher Crave Entertainment
Developer David A Palmer Productions



NOT CONTENT WITH a single game based on the MiB animated series, Crave Entertainment decided to use its neuralyser to flash away our memory and give us a second attempt. This time you get to play as either Agent J or Agent K (the Tommy Lee Jones character) in a platformer consisting of eight stages: a hijacked aircraft, the MiB HQ, a forest, Manhattan, a safe house, a rocket silo, a lab and the Statue of Liberty. The aim in each stage is to collect four pairs of sunglasses (even though your character is already wearing some), meaning this is a game about exploration rather than simply running to the right. Weapons include the infamous 'Noisy Cricket' gun, which is much weaker here than in the film. ■

FACT

Technically, since the game is based on the same animated series it should be called Men in Black: The Series 2, but the copyright screen at the start of the game suggests otherwise.

MERLIN

Year 2001
Publisher Electronic Arts
Developer RFX Interactive

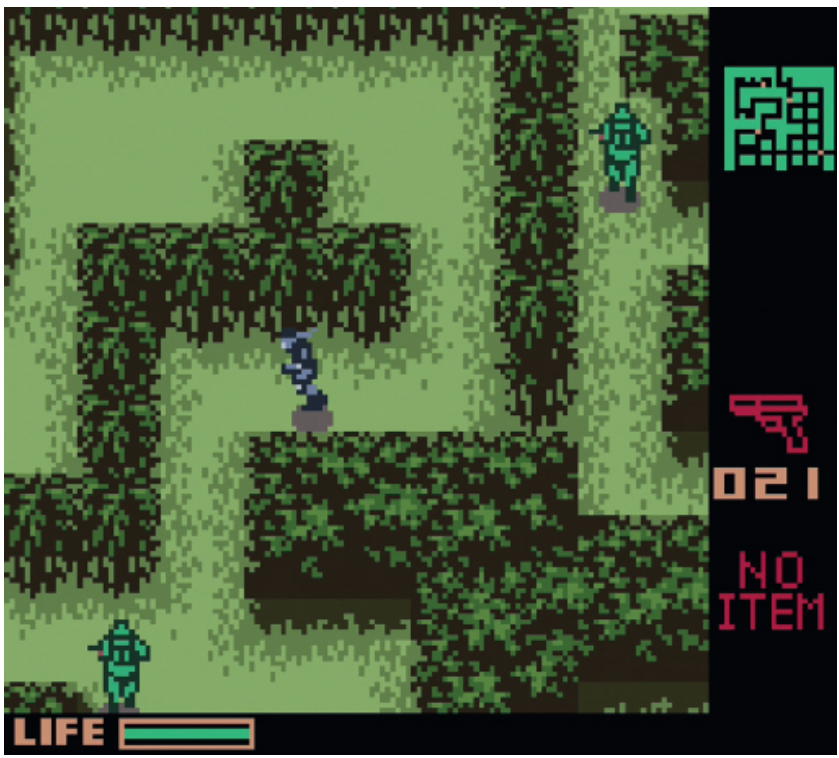
DON'T BE PUT off by the simple title or the fact it stars everyone's favourite public domain wizard: Merlin is arguably one of the Game Boy Color's hidden gems. After sleeping for 1,000 years, an evil dragon wakes up and enslaves all the peaceful spirits living on Merlin's island, so he heads out to save the day. Merlin is an action platformer in which the protagonist attacks enemies by firing his wand at them. The game's most unique feature is its combo system, in which killing multiple enemies without taking a hit will give you power-ups. Kill six enemies in a row to get a shield, kill 12 to power up your shots and kill 18 for a huge magic attack. ■

FACT

Although the Merlin we know today was first introduced in the 12th century, it wasn't until the early 1800s that he started frequently being depicted as an old man with a big white beard.

METAL GEAR SOLID

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Konami Tose



WHEN BRINGING THE groundbreaking PlayStation game Metal Gear Solid to the Game Boy Color, Konami decided to create an entirely new adventure that combined the mood of the PS1 game with the look of the original 8-bit Metal Gear games. Known in Japan as Metal Gear: Ghost Babel – Metal Gear GB, get it? – the game is set in a non-canon, alternative timeline, offering a unique

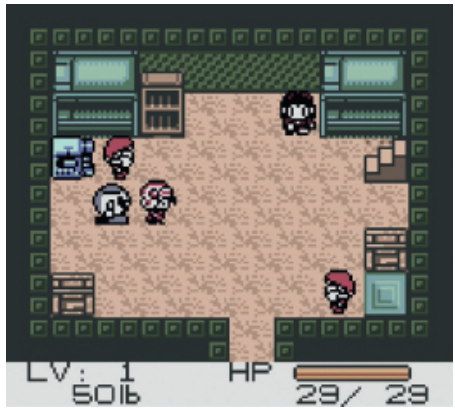
take on what Metal Gear Solid's plot could have been (which explains why the adventure is new but Snake doesn't recognise people like his radio support teammate Mei Ling). Set seven years after the events of the NES Metal Gear, Solid Snake is trying to live a solitary life in Alaska when Colonel Roy Campbell visits him, asking him to come out of retirement one more time. A US-funded prototype of the Metal Gear weapon has been hijacked and stolen by a South African terrorist group, and what's more they're based at the former location of Outer Heaven, where the first game was set. Cue a stealthy adventure which feels like a surprisingly faithful recreation of the Metal Gear Solid vibe, despite the lack of voice acting, polygonal environments or orchestral soundtrack. And for those who finish the game, there are around 180 'VR Training' stages too. The result is a game that frequently appeared in the top 10 lists of many a Game Boy player, and enjoyed numerous extremely high scores in gaming publications at the time of its release (including a 10/10 at IGN). ■

FACT

In the PlayStation Metal Gear Solid, Snake could smoke cigarettes and blow the smoke to detect laser tripwires. Since cigarettes were iffy for a GBC game, here he uses a 'Fogger' gizmo instead.

METAL WALKER

Year 2001
Publisher Capcom
Developer Tose



CAPCOM'S UNIQUE RPG was lost a little in the shadow of the Pokémon craze but it included a number of interesting ideas. You play as a young boy searching for valuable Core Units on an island, in the hope of finding his missing father after the two were separated during an attack. The lad is accompanied by a Metal Walker, a small robot which can be used to fight enemies on his behalf. Rather than real-time or traditional turn-based battling, the battles feel more like a pool game, in which you aim your Metal Walker at an opponent and fire it at them to do damage. You can also try to hit them into a scanner: this copies their DNA to a capsule, letting you use their powers in battle. ■

FACT

Metal Walker's first form was as an LCD pedometer game, released in Japan in 1998, where you trained your Metal Walker by walking around with it in your pocket, levelling up its stats.

MIA HAMM SOCCER SHOOTOUT

Year 2000
Publisher SouthPeak / Ubisoft
Developer Aqua Pacific

AT THE TURN of the millennium, women's football was enormous in North America thanks to the continued dominance of the US national team, so their star player Mia Hamm was signed up for this Game Boy Color game. Don't worry if you aren't particularly interested in Hamm, or if your patriotism lies elsewhere: there are 32 national teams to choose from here, either in a one-off Friendly match, Arcade mode (where you have to beat a series of teams in a row to win the trophy) or Tournament mode (in which you… um, have to do the same, really). With the exception of Hamm herself, all the other player names in the game are entirely fictional, which doubtless upset the Brandi Chastain fans at the time. ■

FACT

Given that it was less familiar with women's football at the time, the EU got a reskinned (and regendered) version called European Super League.

MICKEY'S RACING ADVENTURE

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Nintendo Rare

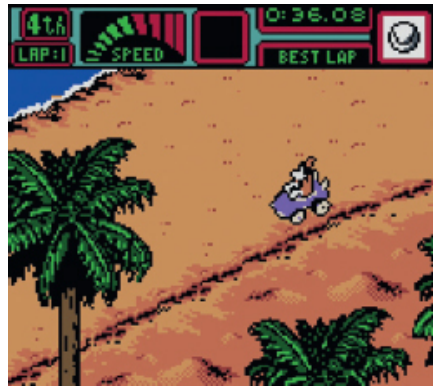
THIS RACING GAME has Mickey and chums trying to chase down Pete, who's stolen a bunch of items from them. Rather than simply providing a series of races, this game is a proper adventure (hence the name) in which you wander around numerous areas, talking to people and collecting items in between the races. Starting off as Mickey, as you continue to win races and progress through the adventure you'll unlock Minnie, Daisy, Donald and Goofy, who can then take part in races too. The actual gameplay is very similar to Rare's RC Pro- Am games on the NES and Game Boy, offering an isometric viewpoint and the same type of skidding mechanic. This is certainly no bad thing. ■

FACT

After Rare finished Conker's Pocket Tales, it started work on the GBC version of Perfect Dark. The project was delayed, though, so that Mickey's Racing Adventure could be finished first.

MICKEY'S SPEEDWAY USA

Year 2001
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Rare



A HANDHELD COMPANION piece to the Nintendo 64 game of the same name, Mickey's Speedway USA is a lot more like its GBC predecessor Mickey's Racing Adventure, but with far less exploration and focused more on just racing. There are 20 tracks in the handheld version, covering a variety of locations in the USA including Nebraska, the Florida Everglades, Seattle and the Grand Canyon. There are six racers in the game, each with their own stats: Minnie and Daisy have great handling but are light, Goofy and Pete have high top speed and are heavy but have poor acceleration, and Mickey and Donald are generally quite average, very much making them the Mario and Luigi of the game. ■

FACT

The GBC version can be connected to the N64 version using the Transfer Pak peripheral. Doing this is the only way to unlock Huey in the N64 version.

MICRO MACHINES 1 AND 2: TWIN TURBO

Year Publisher Developer 2000 THQ Virtucraft

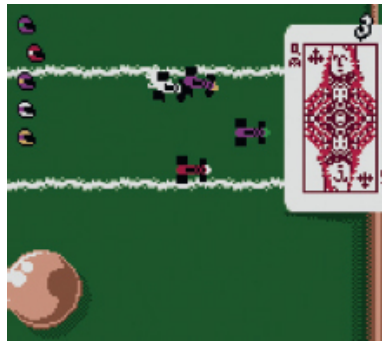
ALTHOUGH THE FIRST two Micro Machines games were both released on the standard Game Boy, it would have been easy to ditch the first title and simply port over Micro Machines 2 given that it was the newer game. Instead, THQ and Codemasters bundled both games onto a single cart, giving them both the Game Boy Color treatment: a move that particularly benefited North America, who didn't get the Game Boy version of Micro Machines 2. The new versions here aren't identical to their monochrome editions: while they're very similar there are little tweaks here and there, such as new menu screens. The main loss, however, is the ability to link to a friend and play with two handhelds, something that was available in both Game Boy games. ■

FACT

When you put both games together side-byside like this, it becomes clearer that Micro Machines 2 is the harder game because it has a more zoomed-in viewpoint.

MICRO MACHINES V3

Year 2000
Publisher THQ
Developer Novalicious



WHEN MICRO MACHINES returned for its third main entry in the series, the big selling point was the switch from sprite-based to polygonal graphics for the console versions on PS1 and N64. Because the Game Boy Color obviously couldn't handle such flourish, it instead stuck with the tried-and-tested top-down viewpoint from the previous two games, making it a brilliant third game in its own right. Despite clearly being a different game from its console counterparts, however, V3's tracks are at least based on the polygonal ones, meaning players are still racing dump trucks on restaurant tables, riding speedboats in garden ponds and zooming F1 cars through a science lab. The only real problem critics had was that it still didn't offer Link Cable multiplayer. ■

FACT

Despite the lack of Link Cable features, both GBC Micro Machines carts at least have two-player racing on the same handheld, with one player steering with the D-Pad and the other using A and B.

MICRO MANIACS

Year Publisher Developer 2001 THQ Hyperion Studios

THIS SPIN-OFF OF the Micro Machines series swaps out cars for tiny people. It's even got a plot: with the Earth's resources rapidly being used up, an imaginative scientist decides one solution could be to shrink the entire planet's population down to just 5 millimetres in height, meaning we would only need to use a fraction of its resources. To test his theory, he enlists the help of 12 volunteers, shrinking them down and making them race along a variety of locations to see which one has the skills to help tiny-proof the planet once everyone's shrunk. The game plays similarly to Micro Machines, then, except everyone's running around, there are power-ups and the game is played in an isometric view instead of an overhead one. ■

FACT

The main 'hero' character is called V4, which is a reference to the game being the fourth main Micro Machines title (since the third game was called Micro Machines V3).

MICROSOFT: THE 6-IN- 1 PUZZLE COLLECTION ENTERTAINMENT PACK

Year 2000
Publisher Conspiracy / Classified Games
Developer Conspiracy

LONG BEFORE XBOX was bringing Banjo and Kazooie to Smash Bros and porting Minecraft to Wii U and Switch, Microsoft was still releasing games on Nintendo systems. This one is a cut-down version of its Windows compilation Microsoft Entertainment Pack: The Puzzle Collection, and contains six of the 10 puzzle games featured in that. There's gem-stealing in Jewel Chase, arranging bugs in Spring Weekend, queuing up sports balls in Lineup, filling grids with marbles in Finty Flush, hitting discs with light rays in Color Collision and matching differently coloured vermin in Rat Poker. A word of warning to the sneaky types who use emulation, though: there are no tutorials or instructions in here so you'll need to go hunting for a manual. ■

FACT

Some of the games in the compilation were designed by Tetris creator Alexey Pajitnov. None of them really come close to matching it, though.

MICROSOFT: THE BEST OF ENTERTAINMENT PACK

Year 2001
Publisher Cryo Interactive /
Developer Classified Games Saffire

BETWEEN 1990 AND 1992, Microsoft released four Entertainment Packs for Windows 3.0 PCs, each containing a selection of casual games. In 1994 it released The Best of Entertainment Pack, which gathered 13 of the most well-loved games from the quartet: this was then ported to the Game Boy Color, albeit with a different selection of seven games. There are three card games to choose from (FreeCell Solitaire, Tut's Tomb and TriPeaks Solitaire), as well as slalom skiing game SkiFree, competitive life simulator puzzler LifeGenesis, 3D noughts and crosses game TicTactics, and a little game by the name of Minesweeper. Each game has its own bespoke options menu, and the whole thing is delightfully presented to look like an early Windows 95 desktop. ■

FACT

A total of 31 games were made available in the four Entertainment Packs. Of these, both FreeCell and Minesweeper were later added as standard in Windows 95.

MICROSOFT PINBALL ARCADE

Year 2001
Publisher Cryo Interactive /
Developer Classified Games Saffire

ANOTHER MICROSOFT PC compilation given the Game Boy Color treatment, Pinball Arcade originally consisted of seven real-life Gottlieb pinball tables, which was then reduced to five tables for the Game Boy Color version. The tables cover a 50-year span of Gottlieb's history, starting with 1931 table Baffle Ball and taking in Knock Out (1950), Slick Chick (1963), Spirit of '76 (1976) and Haunted House (1982). As well as recreations of each table, the game also contains a History section, where you can read about the history of pinball games (not just Gottlieb ones), read some trivia and get advice on how to play pinball well with certain nifty techniques. It may have aged, especially when looking at modern games that recreate pinball tables, but it does its job. ■

FACT

Baffle Ball is so early that it doesn't even have flippers: you just pull the plunger and see where your 10 balls land, similar to Bagatelle or a slower version of Pachinko.

MILLENNIUM WINTER SPORTS

Year 2000
Publisher Konami
Developer Konami

IT MAY NOT be immediately clear by either the North American title or the European one (Konami Winter Games), but the Japanese title Hyper Olympic Winter 2000 gives away that this is a winter-based spin-off of the Track & Field series, which is known as Hyper Olympic in Japan. At first there are only four events to choose from: Ski Jumping K-90, Alpine Downhill, Speed Skating and Snowboard Half-Pipe. By taking on these events in the game's Challenge mode, though, you can gain access to the other four: Ski Jumping K-120, Freestyle Skiing Aerials, Snowboard Giant Slalom and Four-Man Bobsled. If you don't have the chops to unlock them, there's also a Championship mode where you play all eight in a row. ■

FACT

The Japanese version was also sponsored by the Japanese Olympic Committee, even though the next Winter Olympics wasn't until 2002.

MISSILE COMMAND

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Hasbro Interactive The Code Monkeys

THIS IS AN updated version of the 1992 port of Missile Command released on the original Game Boy by Accolade. Hasbro Interactive's republished version retains the same music, sound effects and gameplay engine, but does at least do one or two things to take advantage of the GBC hardware, the addition of colour aside. While the enemy missiles are still basic straight lines – you can't mess with the original formula too much, after all – the game does feature completely redrawn sprites for your missile launchers and the home bases you're trying to defend, making it clearer that they're little buildings rather than identical towers. It's also one of the handful of Game Boy Color cartridges that supports rumble, making a satisfying buzz every time you fire a shot. ■

FACT

When Atari commissioned the original game, its creator Dave Theurer insisted that it had to be about defending your city from incoming missiles, rather than actually killing anyone.

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Infogrames Rebellion

WHEN A UN weapons inspector disappears while looking into a Doomsday weapon, the Impossible Mission Force sends Ethan Hunt out to rescue him. There are 10 missions in all, each of which requires you to infiltrate an enemy-ridden location and perform specific tasks. Although there are multiple ways to approach the game, it clearly wants you to take the stealthy approach, awarding you extra points for not being spotted. Once you've had your fill of secret agent shenanigans, the game also does a complete 180-degree turn and offers an Agent Organiser mode, which lets you save notes and beam them to a friend's copy of the game, or print them using the Game Boy Printer. Instead of, you know, just writing them on paper. ■

FACT

One bizarre feature of the Agent Organiser lets you point a TV remote at the Game Boy's IR receiver and register inputs, then use the game's interface to operate the TV, confusing your family.

MONKEY PUNCHER

Year Publisher Developer

2000 Event Evolution
Entertainment Atelier Double

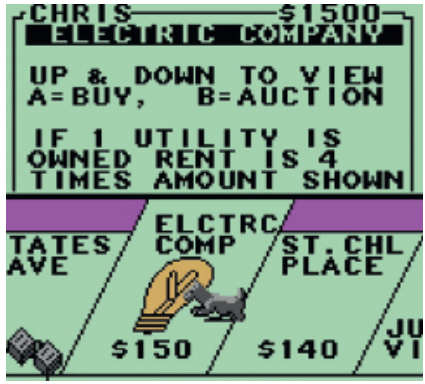
THIS ISN'T REALLY a sentence that should be committed to print, but Monkey Puncher is the closest thing to an animal blood sport game on a Nintendo system. After your father and sibling are kidnapped, you're given a monkey and told that the only way to rescue them is to enter it in boxing matches. Most of the game, then, is spent training your monkey by teaching it to use a skipping rope and a punch bag, then feeding it. When fights inevitably come around, you sit back and watch as your 'pet' punches other animals' heads in for your benefit. You can even get your monkey to go to the shops for you, and at that point you really have to wonder what's going on. ■

FACT

In case the game doesn't sound odd enough, it eventually emerges that your father has been brainwashed and you have to make your monkey fight his monkey.

MONOPOLY

Year 1999
Publisher Majesco
Developer Sculptured Software



MONOPOLY IS ANOTHER Game Boy Color port of a Game Boy title that's been barely changed beyond the addition of colour graphics. Practically every element from the 1991 Game Boy release is present and accounted for here, from the music and sound effects to the same selection of eight AI opponents, to the exact same user interface. If you wanted to get extremely pedantic about it you could point out that there are a couple of miniscule differences: the title screen has a few more buildings on it, for example, and the Monopoly logo on the board is a little taller. To all intents and purposes, however, you're looking at the exact game here, which is why the fact it's Game Boy compatible is no surprise. ■

FACT

The Monopoly mascot, previously known as Rich Uncle Pennybags but simply called Mr Monopoly these days, is said to have been based on pioneering US financier J.P. Morgan.

MONSTER RANCHER BATTLE CARD GB

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Tecmo Graphic Research

TECMO'S MONSTER RANCHER series started with a PS1 game in 1997 and has players raising, breeding and fighting monsters (sounds familiar) by using music CDs to generate new creatures (sounds less familiar). As the name of this Game Boy Color spin-off implies, Battle Card GB replaces the main series' battle system with a card-based one. After taking a personality test, you're given your initial deck of cards, which will be based on one of three teams: Power (who focus on strong attacks), Speed (who focus on getting in the first hit) or Miracle (who focus on making comebacks with surprising counters). By earning new cards to strengthen your deck, you can work towards the goal of collecting every card and becoming a Master Class Card Breeder. ■

FACT

The game got a PS1 sequel called Battle Card Episode II, which continues the card battling system but adds the main series' trademark music CD gimmick.

MONSTER RANCHER EXPLORER

Year 2000
Publisher Tecmo
Developer Graphic Research

IF MONSTER RANCHER Battle Card GB was still a bit too close to the standard Monster Rancher experience for you, there was also this puzzle platformer spinoff which is practically nothing like the main series. You play as Cox, an explorer who has to make his way up a giant tower. An evil mage called Nada has taken over the land and she's doing it all from the top of the tower, so Cox has to get up there, defeat her and save the day. Explorer plays a lot like Tecmo's puzzle platformer series Solomon Quest, with Cox able to spawn and remove boxes which can be used as platforms. There are also bonus stages where you can collect monsters to help you on your travels. ■

FACT

The reason it plays so much like Solomon's Key is because it's actually the last game in that series. In Japan it's simply known as Solomon.

MONSTERS INC

Year Publisher Developer 2001 THQ Vicarious Visions

PIXAR'S BRILLIANT ANIMATED movie about monsters powering their city with children's screams got a 3D platformer on the PS2 and 2D platformers on the GBC and GBA. This one follows the plot of the movie fairly closely and has you playing mainly as Sulley (though some stages let you swap in Mike) as you play through 14 levels based on various locations from the film: Sulley's apartment, the Scare Floor, the Monsters Inc building, the streets of Monstropolis, the Himalayas and the like before finally confronting Randall and Waternoose in boss fights. It borrows from the Sonic games in that the player has to collect cans of Blort, which work like rings. If you're hit you drop your Blort, and if you're hit again without any you die. ■

FACT

Back in those early days of Pixar movies, pushing the tech meant a lot of strain. A single frame featuring Sulley took 12 hours to render, because of his 2.3 million strands of hair.

MONTEZUMA'S RETURN

Year 1998
Publisher Take Two Interactive
Developer Tarantula Studios

MONTEZUMA'S RETURN IS another one of those games that's the bane of a *Game Boy Encyclopedia* writer's life (which to be fair is quite a niche), a Game Boy Color game that's practically identical to the Game Boy release other than the most obvious difference, the addition of colour. Every sprite is identical, the music is unchanged, and to all intents and purposes it's basically the first version with a new colourised mode included. Since it also works on the original Game Boy, it stands to reason that if you're ever in a position where both games are available to you, the Game Boy Color version is the one to go for, unless you insist on collecting every variation of every game. ■

FACT

Montzeuma's Return was also released on PC but is a completely different game: it's a first-person puzzle platformer that looks like Tomb Raider crossed with Turok.

MOOMIN'S TALE

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Sunsoft Pixel

THE MOOMINS HAVE been going since the 1940s, but this game is based on the 1990 Japanese anime adaptation. It's a charming enough platform game which is split into six stories, each with a different goal: find Moominmama's hankie, investigate a red light on a mountain, find the missing hand organ, sneak onto a newly discovered ghost ship, head to the observatory to see a solar eclipse and find medicine for Snork Maiden. The game was originally released in Japan, and this European release is missing a lot of features. Some stages have been moved and removed, and as a result the hub worlds for each story are also gone, along with some of the dialogue. ■

FACT

Another anime Moomin series was released in 1969, but the Moomins' Swedish creator Tove Jansson hated it because it showed the Moomins doing things like getting drunk and firing guns.

MOORHUHN 2: DIE JAGD GEHT WEITER

Year	2001
Publisher	Ravensburger Interactive
Developer	Similis

KNOWN OUTSIDE OF its native Germany as Crazy Chicken, Chicken Hunter or Moorhen, Moorhuhn started life as an ‘advergame’ made playable in pubs to advertise Johnny Walker whisky and became so popular it was officially released as a full game. Although it’s spawned numerous spin-offs, the main Moorhuhn series has always featured a shooting gallery, where players have to score as many points as possible by shooting flying chickens in a Scottish countryside. This GBC port of the second game includes extra mini-games, including Spinnen Spinnen (in which you have to keep hitting a spider on a web to spin it round), Hau das Huhn (which is like Whack-a- Mole) and Die Moorballons (where coloured balloons fly through the sky and you have to hit 99 red ones). ■

FACT

For those not into their ‘80s German new wave pop music, Die Moorballons is a reference to the iconic 1983 Nena song ‘99 Luftballons’, which got an English version called ‘99 Red Balloons’.

MOORHUHN 3: ES GIBT HUHN!

Year 2002
Publisher Ubisoft
Developer Similis

THE THIRD MOORHUHN game is much the same as its predecessor mechanically, but adds a new gimmick in which you can only shoot the chickens holding red flags, and will lose points if you shoot any chickens who aren't. Three new mini-games are also included in the cartridge, including Bandits (in which three doors open up and you have to shoot the chickens holding weapons while ignoring the ones holding flowers), Moortris (a disorientating side-on version of Tetris) and Fishblast (which appears to be some sort of odd joke non-game where you just press A to drop a single stick of dynamite into a river and the game scores you on how many fish it killed). Moorhuhn 2 is a wee bit better. ■

FACT

There have been more than 70 Moorhuhn games and spin-offs over the years, including seven karting games.

MORTAL KOMBAT 4

Year 1998
Publisher Midway
Developer Digital Eclipse

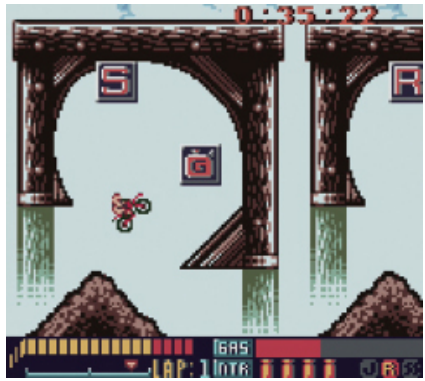
AS DIFFICULT AS it would have been to port the first three Mortal Kombat games to the Game Boy, the challenge must have been increased dramatically when it came to Mortal Kombat 4, the first polygonal game in the series. Rather than severely downgrading pre-existing sprites, then, the GBA version of MK4 is essentially an entirely new game which attempts to replicate the feel of its bigger brother. In fact, technically it attempts to replicate the feel of the Mortal Kombat 3 instead, because the game engine is based on Digital Eclipse's GBC port of the previous game. MK4's roster is much smaller on the Game Boy Color than it is in the arcade version, with eight characters (and an unlockable Reptile) versus 16. ■

FACT

Mortal Kombat 4 is the only Mortal Kombat game that was released in arcades and never had its emulated arcade version ported to consoles later down the line.

MOTOCROSS MANIACS 2

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Konami Konami



THE SEQUEL TO Motocross Maniacs offers similar gameplay to its predecessor, but adds more features (and colour, of course). As before, the aim is to make it through a series of elaborate, obstaclefilled motocross tracks by using your limited supply of nitro boosts at the right time to get past the trickier moments. While the first game had eight courses there are 10 to choose from here, and as well as a new Championship mode where you take part in five separate stages then try to rank highest against your CPU opponents. For those who exhaust all the game's possibilities, there's also a new Course Edit mode where you can create your own stages and send them wirelessly to a similar Motocross Maniacs 2 fanatic. ■

FACT

It would appear that the Motocross Maniacs brand didn't have as much clout in Europe, as the sequel was renamed Crazy Bikers for that region.

MR DRILLER

Year 2000
Publisher Namco / Virgin Interactive
Developer Namco

MR DRILLER IS one of those arcade games that ports well to less powerful systems because of its simplistic mechanics, and sure enough the brilliant GBC port released nine months after its coin-op debut doesn't miss a beat. Playing as Susumu Hori (the son of Dig Dug protagonist Taizo Hori), you have to drill your way downwards as far as possible: either until you reach a set distance, or until you die if it's in Endless mode. The problem is that the laws of gravity apply here – well, to an extent – and as Mr Driller removes blocks he starts off chain reactions in which other blocks can cascade downwards, landing on and killing him. What's more, his air is limited, which means you have to keep moving to collect air capsules. ■

FACT

Namco artist Kaori Shinozaki deliberately made the colours of Mr Driller's outfit and the blocks bright, pastel shades because she wanted the game to appeal to all ages and genders.

MR NUTZ

Year 1999
Publisher Infogrames
Developer Planet Interactive

THE GAME BOY Color version of Mr Nutz is based heavily on the Game Boy version, but there are at least some differences here. the GBC version now opens with a brief intro screen containing a title crawl explaining the game's plot, with the Yeti wanting to turn Earth cold and Mr Nutz not wanting anything to do with that. Some of the soundtrack has also changed, meaning that some stages play completely different music between versions. Other than that, the changes are mainly cosmetic and fairly minimal: there's a sort of wavy transition effect every time the game moves to and from the map screen and the addition of colour allows for extra detail in the backgrounds. ■

FACT

The game's passwords were tweaked a little to avoid GBC players using old GB codes. Codes like DOMINO, JUMPER and SWITCH were changed to DDMMNN, JJMPPR and SWWTCH.

MS PAC-MAN: SPECIAL COLOR EDITION

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Namco / Acclaim Namco

THIS RE-RELEASE OF the Game Boy Ms Pac-Man is more generous than most straight GB-to-GBC ports. The Game Boy version is here (in colour, obviously) with all the previous features: the ability to choose between a zoomed-in and full-screen view of the maze, and the option to choose the arcade stages or a Hard mode. Rather than simply drawing a line under it and releasing it as is, however, Namco also included a bonus game, a new Game Boy Color port of Super Pac-Man. This was the third game in the Pac-Man series and while it was less straightforward than the first two (and so had less widespread appeal) its new features like keys, doors and pellets that turn Pac-Man massive made it pleasantly anarchic. ■

FACT

The North American release is better than the European release, because the latter is missing Super Game Boy features (they're still on the cartridge, but they've been disabled).

MTV SPORTS: PURE RIDE

Year 2000
Publisher THQ
Developer Visual Impact

THQ TEAMED UP with MTV to create a series of extreme sports games in an attempt to get a slice of the Tony Hawk pie. Pure Ride focuses on snowboarding, and lets you choose from a selection of fictional riders and boards, each affecting the player's stamina, weight, speed and braking stats. The game's main mode is MTV Tour, in which you travel around the world taking on slalom races. The aim in each is to not only reach the end of each run before the time runs out, but to pass a target points threshold by successfully navigating the slalom flags and performing mid-air tricks along the way. Once you master this, it's onto the Pure Ride tour which adds half-pipe qualification events to the mix. ■

FACT

There was an actual MTV Sports show which focused on extreme sports and ran from 1992 to 1997, but its branding was different to the branding in the MTV Sports games.

MTV SPORTS: SKATEBOARDING FEATURING ANDY MACDONALD

Year 2000
Publisher THQ
Developer Yellowbelly Corporation

LET'S FACE IT, you don't start a new extreme sports video game brand if you're not going to have a crack at skateboarding, so MTV and THQ employed the services of vert skateboarding maestro Andy Macdonald for this digital recreation of the sport. The Game Boy Color version is played from an isometric viewpoint, as players guide Andy (or one of three fictional skaters) around the park, pulling off grinds and air tricks. There are three separate 'tours' to play through: the US Tour features eight cities from San Francisco to New York, the European Tour features nine more from London to Moscow, and the final World Tour mode combines 12 venues from both. ■

FACT

The manual has words of 'wisdom' from Andy Macdonald, including how he hasn't played many games since Pong, and that players should 'go out and live life' instead of playing games.

MTV SPORTS: TJ LAVIN'S ULTIMATE BMX

Year Publisher Developer 2000 THQ Handheld Games

LISTEN, LET'S NOT beat around the bush: when you get TJ Lavin involved, there's no way your BMX can be anything but ultimate. Such is the descriptor that finds itself nestled in the title of the third MTV Sports game, which boasts 'a ton of BMX dirt, street and vert tricks'. Unlike the other two MTV Sports games on GBC, this one actually features more than one pro, with five other real-life athletes joining Lavin for the ride (literally). So good news, Fuzzy Hall fans, your boy made it. As well as a Practice mode which lets you get to grips with the game's somewhat clunky control scheme, there's also the main Competition mode where you take on a series of street, halfpipe and dirt jump courses. ■

FACT

Lavin won gold three times at the X Games and became host of MTV reality series *The Challenge*. Fuzzy Hall didn't, but the guy was a sponsored athlete with Vans for 20 years, so give him a break.

THE MUMMY

Year 2000
Publisher Konami
Developer Konami

THIS RATHER DIFFICULT puzzle platformer is based on the hit movie of the same name starring Brendan Fraser and Rachel Weisz. The game generally follows the same story beats as the film, and offers four playable characters (depending on the stage you're playing), each with their own abilities. Evelyn, for example, is the only character who can collect a special key which unlocks specific locked doors, while Rick is the only one who can collect and use the rifle weapon. By switching between Evelyn, Rick, Jonathan and Ardeth, players can get through each stage. The tricky nature of the puzzles and the fact that it's possible to get lost in a stage if certain actions aren't carried out in order makes this a difficult game. ■

FACT

Director Stephen Sommers says Universal Pictures phoned him the day after *The Mummy* was released and said: 'We need another one.' Sure enough… [nods to the right]

THE MUMMY RETURNS

Year 2001
Publisher Universal Interactive
Developer Game Brains

THE MUMMY WAS popular enough to warrant a sequel, and so a second Game Boy Color game accompanied it. This time the focus is more on action than exploring maze-like stages, with a few different gameplay styles spread across the game's 11 stages. The game lets you choose between Evelyn, Rick and Ardeth depending on the stage, and has you engaging in such actions as trying to outrun a huge wall of water, fighting enemies in one-on-one sword and knife duels, flying a blimp and shooting bugs in a jungle, before your final battle with the Scorpion King. There's even a couple of lightgun-style stages where you have to hold the B button to hide and recharge your gun, similar to Time Crisis. ■

FACT

The final boss fight with the Scorpion King in the GBC game looks only slightly worse than the dodgy CGI in the actual movie, which was rushed and finished just eight days before release.

THE MUPPETS

Year 2000
Publisher Take Two Interactive
Developer Tarantula Studios

THINGS AREN'T GOING well at The Muppet Show. Dr Bunsen Honeydew has created a time machine, and it's sent six different Muppets to different eras in time: the Swedish Chef is in 1,000,000 BC, Miss Piggy is in Ancient Egypt, Fozzie is in Ancient Rome, Rowlf has found himself among the Mayans, Gonzo is in the dark ages and Sam the Eagle is in the Wild West. It's up to Kermit and Animal to head to each time zone and rescue their friends in this sadly rather poorly received platformer (critics complained about the controls). Kermit and Animal each have different skills: Kermit can perform a higher jump, while Animal has a stomp move, meaning Kermit is usually the best one to go with. ■

FACT

The stages each have puns for names. The Aztec stage featuring Rowlf is called Raiders of the Lost Bark, while the Wild West section with Sam is called Bun Fight at the OK Corral.

NASCAR 2000

Year 2000
Publisher EA Sports
Developer Software Creations

NASCAR IS AN interesting brand on the Game Boy Color because it has four rather different games from four different developers. NASCAR 2000 is the only one published by EA and it provides the most content of the four, containing 16 officially licensed tracks (all of which are ovals in this case) and 33 real-life drivers including the likes of Dale Earnhardt, Dale Earnhart Jr and 31 others who aren't called Dale Earnhardt. You can set up a single race or take on the Season mode, which has you competing in all 16 races in a row, with full practice and qualifying sessions if you fancy them. There's also a full tuning menu which lets you dabble with fuel, wheel lock, spoiler angle, shock absorbers and the like. ■

FACT

Dale Earnhardt won races and Dale Earnhardt Jr won people over. The father won the NASCAR Cup Series seven times, while the son won Most Popular Driver 15 times in a row.

NASCAR CHALLENGE

Year 1999
Publisher Hasbro Interactive
Developer Morning Star Multimedia

THE FIRST OF the NASCAR games released on the Game Boy Color is the complete opposite of EA's effort in almost every way. There are just three tracks available here – Topeka Raceway in Kansas, Sonoma Raceway in California and Seneca Raceway in Upstate New York – and none of them are ovals this time. You only have one car available to you, and you're racing as yourself instead of a real-life NASCAR driver. There's no tuning beyond a choice between automatic and manual transmission, and the only options are a practice race or taking on all three tracks in a row. The one thing it does boast over its competitors, however, is that its cartridge supports rumble. ■

FACT

When Hasbro Interactive first announced the game in August 1999, it said there would be six tracks, suggesting some were possibly dropped during development.

NASCAR HEAT

Year 2000
Publisher Hasbro Interactive
Developer Game Titan

FOLLOWING THE WIDELY negative reception to its first Game Boy Color NASCAR game, publisher Hasbro Interactive turned to relatively new studio Game Titan to see what it could come up with instead. This time the game is played from an overhead perspective, similar to games like Micro Machines, rather than the typical 'chase' camera view. Rather than racing as yourself there are now 10 real NASCAR drivers to choose from, and there are 10 officially licensed tracks to race on (one of which, Watkins Glen, mercifully isn't an oval). Players can also pull into the pits and have control over the jack, tire crew and gas man. The consensus was that Heat was an improvement over Challenge, but not an enormous one. ■

FACT

The NASCAR Heat name was revived in 2016 for a series of titles developed by Monster Games, better known by Nintendo fans as the studio behind Excite Truck and Pilotwings Resort.

NASCAR RACERS

Year 2000
Publisher Hasbro Interactive
Developer Digital Eclipse

NASCAR RACERS WAS an animated series, produced by Saban and shown by Fox Kids, which attempted to make kids care about NASCAR. It's set in the future and – perhaps tellingly – has very little to do with the actual sport at all, with elaborate tracks, morphing cars and powerups. This Game Boy Color offering is played with an overhead perspective and doesn't really feel like a NASCAR game, letting you choose between five of the show's fictional characters and placing you in such locations as a jungle, Egypt, St Petersburg and the rather nondescript 'Europe'. It's a decent enough game but purists will baulk because with speed boosts, nitro, bridges, puddles and the like it couldn't be further from NASCAR. ■

FACT

NASCAR Racers got two 13-episode seasons before Saban was acquired by Disney in 2001 and the planned third season never happened.

THE NATIONS: LAND OF LEGENDS

Year	2002
Publisher	JoWooD Productions
Developer	Neon Software

THIS LITTLE-KNOWN ADVENTURE game is based on The Nations, a 2001 real-time strategy game released on the PC. This spin-off is less tactical and more action-focused, as you initially control Palemmos, a chunky little chap from the Pimmon race of creatures who's armed with a club and can eventually learn to levitate. The Pimmons, Amazons and Sajikis are the three races sharing the same planet and they're usually enemies (as in the main Nations game) but when a giant dragon threatens to destroy the land they must work together, meaning later in the game you get to play as Hamani (an Amazon who can swim and fires a bow), and Kassass (who can walk through fire and can fire energy blasts). ■

FACT

The PC version of The Nations was a sequel to Alien Nations, another real-time strategy game that was compared at the time to the popular The Settlers III.

NBA 3 ON 3 FEATURING KOBE BRYANT

Year 1999
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Left Field Productions

WHAT DO YOU do when the limitations of the hardware restrict what you can do with it? If you're Left Field Productions, you promote it as a feature, not a setback. While sprite limits mean it can be hard to deliver full 5 on 5 basketball on the Game Boy and GBC without all the players flickering, Left Field attempted to solve the problem by removing 40% of the players and offering 3 on 3 games instead. Taking the real team and player names from the 1999–2000 season, NBA 3 on 3 is played with an isometric viewpoint and takes place on courts with all the proper team branding. Unfortunately, despite Left Field's best efforts, the game does suffer from a lot of player flickering. ■

FACT

This was the Game Boy partner to Nintendo 64 title NBA Courtside 2 Featuring Kobe Bryant, which still offered full 5 on 5 matches.

NBA HOOPZ

Year 2001
Publisher Midway
Developer Torus Games

JUST IN CASE the Z in the title didn't make it clear, this basketball game was released at the turn of the millennium and is based on the 2000–01 season. It too features 3 on 3 gameplay, but as the successor to the 2 on 2 NBA Jam series it's seen as an increase in players, rather than a reduction. After choosing your team and picking your three-man roster you take on the Season mode, where you have to play against and defeat all 28 other teams in the league. The game plays a solid handheld recreation of NBA Jam – over-the-top dunks, going 'on fire' and all – albeit with more of the flickering that plagued most team sports games of the Game Boy era. ■

FACT

The GBC version has an impressive 11 hidden courts, including the top of a volcano, a night club, an oil rig and even a prison courtyard with prisoners lifting weights as you play.

NBA IN THE ZONE

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Konami Konami

KONAMI FOUND GREAT success in the 8-bit era with Double Dribble, so it's probably no surprise that the Game Boy Color version of NBA in the Zone has a similar viewpoint and feel, right down to the way the game cuts to close-up animations any time your player dunks the ball. Where it differs from Double Dribble is the inclusion of the officially licensed NBA teams and players, allowing players to take on a 28, 52, 56 or full 82-game season with authentic rosters from the 1998–99 season. In a fun addition that not many sports games include, there's also an option to turn on 'home advantage', meaning the home team's stats increase as the fans get behind them. ■

FACT

The game's difficulty settings are Fun, Exciting and Challenging. This was seemingly considered too confusing because the sequel changed them to Easy, Normal and Hard.

NBA IN THE ZONE 2000

Year 2000
Publisher Konami
Developer Konami

THE SEQUEL TO NBA in the Zone ditches support for the standard Game Boy but doesn't offer much in the way of a performance increase as a result. Naturally, the rosters have been updated to feature the 1999–2000 season players and stats, and there are some new dunk cutscene animations but other than that it's business as usual on the court. The main new addition is Shootout mode, where two players (or one player and the CPU) do a 3-point-shootout challenge – where there are five sets of five balls placed around the three-point line – at the same time. Once you get the timing right, though, scoring a perfect 30 is pretty easy, meaning draws with your friends become common. ■

FACT

Both NBA in the Zone games offer Link Play for two-player games, but both reduce the game speed during this mode, for some reason.

NBA JAM 99

Year 1998
Publisher Acclaim
Developer Torus Games

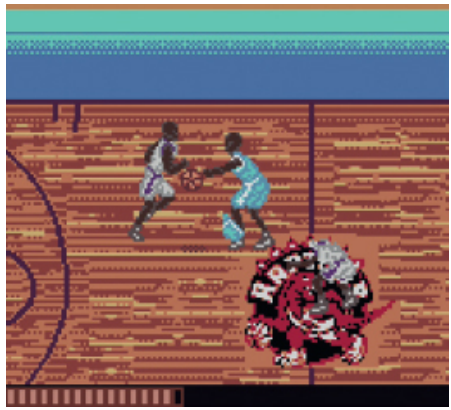
AFTER WRESTLING THE NBA Jam name from its original creators at Midway, Acclaim decided to ditch what made the series popular and switched from 2 vs 2 basketball to full 5 vs 5 games. As has already been established in this book, however, the Game Boy Color struggled with team sports featuring too many players on-screen, so the GBC version of NBA Jam 99 drops back to 2 vs 2, more out of necessity than preference. This also meant an excuse to dig up the old NBA Jam Tournament Edition code from the Game Boy and use that as the foundation, meaning NBA Jam 99 is essentially the successor to that, with slightly improved (and obviously colourised) graphics and updated rosters. ■

FACT

The manual contains a pep talk from the New Jersey Nets' Keith Van Horn, who insists that you 'get on the boards and show me what a real jammer can do'. Quite.

NBA JAM 2001

Year 2000
Publisher Acclaim
Developer DC Studios



ACCLAIM FOLLOWED UP NBA Jam 99 with NBA Jam 2000 on the N64, but by the time a Game Boy Color version turned up it was already November 2000, hence the decision to slap a 2001 moniker onto it instead. Rather than churning out the same game with updated rosters, NBA Jam 2001 completely revamps the look of the game, ditching the zoomed-out side-scrolling view of its predecessors in favour of a closer view, with scrolling in four directions. Change isn't always welcomed, however, and 2001 was criticised for having players that ran so fast they were difficult to control. One bright side is the digitised commentary, though it does include such ill-judged lines as 'look at those guys bang'. ■

FACT

Developer DC Studios was given another crack at it with NBA Jam 2002 on the Game Boy Advance, but that too was reviewed negatively.

NBA SHOWTIME: NBA ON NBC

Year 2000
Publisher Midway
Developer Torus Games

THE ARCADE VERSION of NBA Showtime was the first of Midway's basketball games to feature fully polygonal graphics, but obviously this wasn't the case on Game Boy Color. Instead, Torus Games' offering is similar to the Game Boy NBA Jam games (before Midway lost its NBA Jam branding) and offers the same reasonable handheld take on the series' 2 on 2 gameplay that had featured on the original Game Boy. As ever, all 29 real NBA team names and logos are in here, and more than 100 actual NBA players feature (due to the teams' reduced roster sizes). These days it's not really worth bothering with when its successor, NBA Showtime, does everything it does and adds a bunch of hidden stuff. ■

FACT

Every NBA Jam game (and Midway's renamed equivalents) on Game Boy suffers from being a threebutton game on a two-button handheld, meaning Turbo is almost always the Start button.

THE NEW ADDAMS FAMILY SERIES

Year 2002
Publisher Microids
Developer 7th Sense

GAME BOY POINT-ANDCLICK adventure The Fish Files was such an impressive debut from Italian studio 7th Sense that it was asked to create something similar for the Canadian TV reboot of *The Addams Family* (it only lasted 10 months, if you aren't aware of it). The family's mansion is set to be knocked down so a theme park can be built in its place, so Pugsley and Wednesday set out to see if they can stop it happening. Like The Fish Files, the game ditches the usual list of point-and-click verbs (pick up, talk, open, etc) in favour of a simpler method in which B looks and A performs an appropriate action. Speaking of action, there are occasional mini-game sections, which critics agreed were the weak point. ■

FACT

The game was due to be published by Titus in North America (with 'Series' removed from the title) but this was abandoned, presumably because the show was already long dead.

THE NEW ADVENTURES OF MARY-KATE & ASHLEY

Year 1999
Publisher Acclaim
Developer Crawfish Interactive

EUROPEAN RELEASE MAYA the Bee and Her Friends was re-skinned and its levels split into two separate Olsen Twins games for North America: this one and its ‘sequel’ Mary-Kate & Ashley: Get a Clue. It’s a puzzle platformer where you press Select to swap control between Mary-Kate, Ashley and their dog Clue to retrieve the puzzle pieces locked away in each stage. Each character has their own ability: Ashley can flick switches (including the one that frees the puzzle piece) and can throw Clue at enemies, Mary-Kate can jump higher and lets others bounce off her head to reach higher levels (which can’t be canon) and Clue can swim and be stood on to gain extra height. ■

FACT

The name is a reference to *The Adventures of Mary- Kate & Ashley*, a series of 30-minute TV specials in which the twins (then aged 8) solved mysteries. Don’t lie, you’ve seen them all.

NFL BLITZ

Year 1998
Publisher Midway
Developer Digital Eclipse

NFL BLITZ WAS Midway's attempt to apply the NBA Jam formula to American football by making it fast-paced, over the top and lacking in most of the standard rules. Basically, it's a game where pass interference isn't outlawed, it's encouraged. NFL Blitz was a big success in arcades and on home consoles, and this GBC version attempts to replicate this, offering a Season mode where you have to defeat the other 29 NFL teams in succession. An unusual decision was made, however, to ditch the arcade version's vertically scrolling viewpoint in favour of an isometric perspective. One particularly annoying quirk is the CPU's tendency to be able to sack the quarterback almost instantly, with the player seemingly helpless a lot of the time. ■

FACT

The arcade original was going to have blood and violent attacks like spinebusters until the NFL demanded that it be toned down a bit.

NFL BLITZ 2000

Year 1999
Publisher Midway
Developer Digital Eclipse

THE CRITICAL RECEPTION to the GBC version of NFL Blitz was pretty negative so it was back to the drawing board for NFL Blitz 2000. This time the viewpoint was switched to an overhead view, and now you could switch between side-scrolling (the default) and vertical scrolling like the arcade version. Digitised speech was added and the menu presentation was designed to look more like the arcade game, and the rosters were updated to bring it in line with the new season. Sadly, however, critics disliked Blitz 2000 even more: the quarterback insta-sack thing was still present, and *IGN* (giving it a 2/10) said it was 'complete garbage', claiming that compared to it, the previous game was 'a programming miracle'. ■

FACT

There are two hidden teams in the game. Emeryville Eclipse is based on the Digital Eclipse development staff, and the Midway Blitzers consist of Midway staff.

NFL BLITZ 2001

Year	2000
Publisher	Midway
Developer	Morning Star Multimedia

AFTER TWO SEPARATE attempts at a Game Boy Color version of NFL Blitz, Digital Eclipse was substituted and a different team was brought to attempt a third down conversion. Once again the game attempts to replicate the presentation of the arcade game, with lots of shouty digitised voices and brief FMV clips whenever you get sacked (which, infuriatingly, continues to happen with bewildering regularity). This time the action sticks with the arcade-like vertical viewpoint, but is more zoomed out. For the third and final time, however, critics once again declared the game a disappointment, thanks to the QB sack issue and frequently frustrating collision detection leading to such reviews as *IGN*'s 3/10, which declared: 'Stick a fork in it, it's done'. ■

FACT

A TV ad for the original Blitz was pulled after complaints. It showed Steelers quarterback Kordell Steward practising his passing, until it's revealed that he's trying to hit the marching band.

NHL 2000

Year 1999
Publisher THQ / EA Sports
Developer Tiertex

EA SPORTS MADE a sole attempt to bring its NHL series to the Game Boy Color and it was considered a successful one. The game includes all 28 teams from the 1999–2000 NHL season (including the new expansion team the Atlanta Thrashers), and boasts the NHLPA licence, meaning all the real player names are in there too. Gameplay is based on the 16-bit NHL games that were so successful on the Mega Drive / Genesis, and while the underpowered GBC hardware obviously doesn't match them, it at least does a reasonable attempt at replicating the feel, with player movement taking a while to build momentum on the ice. Players could take part in a full 82-game season, though the enormous passwords needed to save progress were off-putting. ■

FACT

Much like the Men in Black game, NHL 2000's data includes every track from the Super Game Boy version of A Bug's Life, perhaps to set aside space for an (abandoned) enhanced soundtrack.

NHL BLADES OF STEEL

Year 1999
Publisher Konami
Developer Climax Studios

KONAMI ROCKED ICE hockey fans' collective minds back in the 8-bit days with Blades of Steel, so this Game Boy Color title – released alongside NHL Blades of Steel 99 on the N64 – brings the brand back, along with a shiny new NHL licence replacing the fictional teams of the NES days. While it's not a direct 1:1 replica of the NES game, it's clear that this GBC version is heavily influenced by it, with a similar arcade-like feel and the ability to aim your shots by moving an arrow up and down the goal. As expected, there's the option to play Exhibition games or a full season, and there's a battery back-up for game saves, meaning no lengthy passwords like in EA's game. ■

FACT

The game's cover star, Jaromir Jagr, ended up having the longest professional career in ice hockey history, having played into his 50s with over 2,000 games across 36 seasons.

NHL BLADES OF STEEL 2000

Year 2000
Publisher Konami
Developer Climax Studios

RATHER THAN SIMPLY firing out an update to NHL Blades of Steel with new rosters, Konami decided to tinker with the gameplay engine to make the game noticeably faster than it was before. While this no doubt helped to lean heavier into the arcade nature of the game, it does make things a little harder to control, especially when the action is in the neutral zone and the puck just pingpongs all over the place. The new rosters are indeed there, as is the Winnipeg Jets expansion team, and everything else is present and accounted for with very few major changes. It's really just the increased speed, then, which is divisive. It may be worth seeing both games in action and deciding which pace suits you. ■

FACT

The Atlanta Thrashers only lasted for 12 years, before the team was relocated to Winnipeg to form the second incarnation of the Winnipeg Jets.

NICKTOONS RACING

Year 2000
Publisher Hasbro Interactive
Developer Pipe Dream Interactive

BY THE TURN of the millennium, children's TV channel Nickelodeon had enough muchloved characters that the inevitable karting game was released. There are seven characters to choose from here: Arnold from *Hey Arnold!*, CatDog from *CatDog*, Daggett and Norbert from *The Angry Beavers*, Eliza from *The Wild Thornberrys*, Tommy from *Rugrats* and a plucky up-and-comer called SpongeBob SquarePants. There are 20 tracks spread across four TV show environments. The game is played from an isometric viewpoint and looks pleasant enough, but was criticised for its iffy AI and its occasionally harsh time limit which can have you getting Game Over even if you finish a race in first place. Although it came to GBC first, console ports followed with more characters. ■

FACT

The Angry Beavers was the most short-lived of the shows represented here, with 62 episodes. *CatDog* is close behind, with 68 episodes.

NO FEAR DOWNHILL MOUNTAIN BIKING

Year	2001
Publisher	THQ
Developer	Spellbound Entertainment

THIS INTERESTING LITTLE racing game focus on the sport of downhill mountain biking, offering eight fictional racers to choose from, each with their own balance, power, stamina and recovery stats. There are 20 downhill trails to race through, including a 'Trick Trail' containing jumps. As in real mountain biking, one of the main gameplay mechanics here is your stamina meter. As you pedal your stamina drops, so you have to ease off at times (preferably while going downhill) to recover some. The game is played from a side-on perspective, which does a good job of highlighting just how steep some of the hills are, but also makes lining up your bike tricky in areas where the scenery overlaps. ■

FACT

The No Fear clothing brand, which was set up in the US in 1989, filed for bankruptcy in 2011 and was bought by the UK sports retailer Sports Direct.

NODDY AND THE BIRTHDAY PARTY

Year *Publisher* *Developer*

2000 BBC Multimedia Tiertex

NODDY (THE POPULAR children's character, if you didn't know) is properly stressing out big time. His best friend Big-Ears has a birthday party coming up and Noddy's nowhere near prepared. He has to jump in his car and drive around Toyland, taking on various mini-games to gather the things he needs for the party. One minute he's trying to collect the party invites in his home (in a rather rudimentary platforming section where he walks like the Terminator), the next he's up in a hot air balloon, trying to grab coloured balloons from the sky (rather than just blowing up new ones). Each time you successfully beat a mini-game you also earn sixpences, which can be used to buy a birthday cake at the end. ■

FACT

Noddy was created by Enid Blyton in 1949 and appeared in 24 books. He's since appeared in a host of TV series over the years, including a CGI show created by DreamWorks in 2016.

NSYNC: GET TO THE SHOW

Year Publisher Developer

2001 Infogrames Stunt Puppy Entertainment

YOU AREN'T GOING to believe this, but popular beat combo NSYNC are absolutely shattered, and as their biggest fan you've somehow been roped into running their lives for them. This entails everything from driving their limousine and stopping at the locations they randomly bark out at you, to helping them sleep by preventing any loud noises (in a weird sort of shooting gallery where you shoot telephones and what appear to be groupies), to making burgers for them. This all culminates in the lads Getting to the Show™, at which point they have to play their traditional pre-concert hacky sack juggling game, before it's finally showtime where you get to mess around with the music, lighting and dance moves on the fly in a flagrant overstepping of fan boundaries. ■

FACT

The hacky sack ritual was actually a real thing, but of course as a massive NSYNC fan you already knew this.

NYR: NEW YORK RACE

Year 2001 *Publisher* Wanadoo Edition *Developer* Kalisto

IT'S NOT OFTEN that a video game tie-in of a popular movie only gets a European release, but that's the case with NYR, which is a racing game spin-off based on *The Fifth Element*. As in Luc Besson's movie, the gimmick here is that all the cars can fly, though in this top-down racer they can only fly at two different altitudes. When you're flying high you can gain the fastest top speed, but can get hit by barriers and other obstacles. As you approach these, then, you'll want to dip down and fly low, but only until the danger is clear because your speed is greatly reduced. You start off racing in the Slums in the taxi driven by Bruce Willis, but eventually unlock new cars and tracks. ■

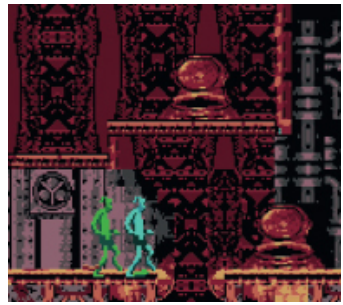
FACT

Besson made the hero a taxi driver because his dad took a second job as a taxi driver to pay for art school for Besson. He puts a taxi driver in almost every movie to honour him.

ODDWORLD ADVENTURES 2

Year Publisher Developer

2000 GT Interactive / Infogrames Saffire



WHILE THE FIRST Oddworld Adventures on the Game Boy confused fans by offering a heavily cut-down version of Abe's Oddysee, its sequel features a far more authentic take on the second Oddworld game, Abe's Exoddus. In it, Abe has to travel to the ancient Mudokun necropolis of Necrum, to stop the Glukkons digging up his ancestors' bones and using them in their SoulStorm Brew drinks. The first Oddworld Adventures only used the series' trademark GameSpeak feature for a single puzzle, but here it's used far more frequently, with Abe able to talk to other Mudokuns to get them to follow him and carry out actions for him. The result is a game that's still scaled back compared to its console source material, but in a more acceptable manner. ■

FACT

The SoulStorm drink is introduced in this sequel, but the first Oddworld game was originally going to be called Soul Storm, before the name was changed to Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee.

O'LEARY MANAGER 2000

Year 2000
Publisher Ubisoft
Developer Live Media

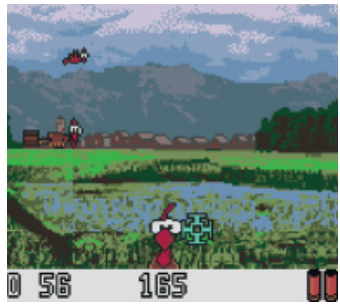
NOT CONTENT WITH merely releasing a standard Game Boy Color football game endorsed by Leeds United manager David O'Leary, Ubisoft decided to knock out this football management game too. Well, sort of. You see, football management is indeed one aspect of this game, which lets you choose any team from the top two divisions in England, Italy, France, Spain, the Netherlands or Germany, and all the real player names are present and accounted for. But the game also gives you the option of either being a manager or a player manager, meaning you don't have to just sit there and watch the match play out. Add to this that it's fun to play and it might just be the best GBC football game. ■

FACT

The game was renamed Guy Roux Manager 2000 in France, DSF Fußball Manager in Germany, Co Adriaanse Football Manager in the Netherlands and Barça Manager 2000 in Spain.

DIE ORIGINAL MOORHUHN JAGD

Year 2000
Publisher Ravensburger Interactive
Developer Nival Interactive



WHILE THE SECOND and third games in the Moorhuhn series would eventually be released on the Game Boy Color, they were preceded (and logically so) by a handheld port of the original game that started the whole craze off in the first place. As would be the case in its subsequent followups, the aim here is still to look around a lovely Scottish landscape (as all Scottish landscapes are) and shoot as many chickens as you can within a set time limit. There are no extra mini-games as in the sequels, but there is a new Tournament mode where you have to hit regular points totals to move onto different levels with new scenery, so if all you're craving is core Moorhuhn gameplay it may actually be the best option. ■

FACT

A Moorhuhn movie was announced in September 2011, and the script was funded by the German film fund. Sadly for fans of movies about cartoon chickens being shot, it was abandoned.

OTTIFANTEN: KOMMANDO STOERTEBEKER

Year 2001
Publisher JoWooD Productions
Developer Kritzelkratz

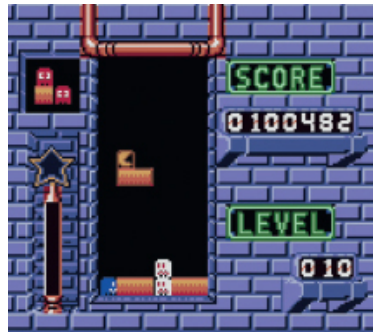
DESPITE HAVING THE same name as the *Ottifanten* movie released at the same time, this Game Boy Color platformer has absolutely nothing to do with the film other than being set in the same universe. Baby Bruno is upset to find that his teddy bear Honk has gone missing, so off he runs to find his lost pal. And when I say 'off he runs', I mean it: this is an auto-scrolling game, so Bruno is constantly moving throughout as he makes his way through the game's four locations (his house, the town, the park and the zoo). The aim is to collect a set number of stars in each stage, but this only affects your ranking, rather than affecting progress. ■

FACT

The movie is about Bruno's dad trying to find buried treasure so he can fund the building of a hospital, after he bet all the money on pig races. See? Nothing like the game.

PAC-MAN: SPECIAL COLOUR EDITION

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Namco / Acclaim Namco



WHEN NAMCO DECIDED to re-release the Game Boy versions of Pac-Man and Ms Pac-Man on the Game Boy Color, it opted to do more than simply apply the colours and chuck the thing into shops. Instead, it was decided that each would contain a bonus game that wasn't already available on the handheld (as seen earlier in the book, Ms Pac-Man came with a new port of Super Pac-Man). This GBC edition of Pac-Man, then, contains a colourised version of the Game Boy Pac-Man as well as a new colourised version of puzzle game Pac-Attack, which had also previously been released on Game Boy but never had a standalone Game Boy Color release. ■

FACT

Much like the Special Colour Edition of Ms Pac-Man, the European version doesn't feature Super Game Boy support whereas the North American version does.

PAINTER

Year Publisher Developer 2001 Rocket Games Incognito

THIS UNOFFICIAL CARTRIDGE from Rocket Games (aka Datel) feels like a newer take on Konami's 1981 arcade game Amidar. As in that game, the aim is to travel around a series of stages made up of line paths, colouring them in as you move along them. Each time you colour in the four lines that enclose a space, the space will be filled in. The aim is to fill in every space: or, in other words, to pass over all the lines in each stage. Naturally, this would be too easy without some sort of obstacle, which is why a variety of enemies are trying to stop you, from little gremlins randomly wandering around, to sponges which actively try to wipe away the paint you've already laid down. ■

FACT

If you're aching for a plot, the game is set in Drip City, and you're painting its underground pipes so they don't go rusty but the gremlins are trying to stop you. Just because.

PAPERBOY

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Midway Digital Eclipse

THIS ISN'T A straight colourised version of the 1990 Game Boy port of Paperboy published by Mindscape and developed by Eastridge Technology: it's a completely separate port handled by Digital Eclipse. As in every other version of the game, you have to throw papers into subscribers' mailboxes (and through non-subscribers' windows) as you avoid the numerous hazards on what's seemingly the world's most dangerous suburban street. The Game Boy Color version was criticised for its awkward collision detection and the tiny mailboxes making it much harder to deliver papers. Its music is also a less authentic take on that of the arcade version, making for a conversion that was generally considered quite awkward and somewhat inferior to the Game Boy version from nine years prior.

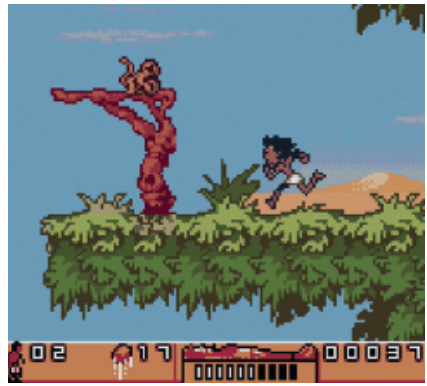
FACT

The manual gives out some useful hints and tips, including the invaluable advice: 'Watch out for moving objects.'

PAPYRUS

Year Publisher Developer

2000 Ubisoft Planet Interactive



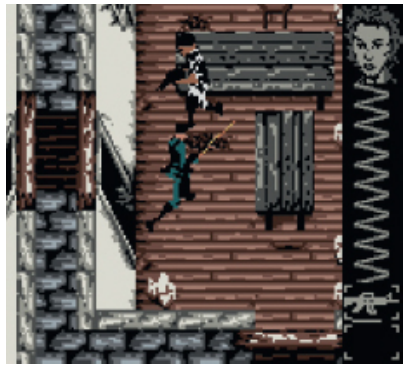
WHEN YOU'VE GOT Game Boy adaptations of the likes of Tintin, Asterix, Spirou, The Smurfs and Lucky Luke, you might as well chuck another Franco-Belgian comic onto the pile. Papyrus tells the story of a young fisherman who has been chosen by the Egyptian gods to travel to the Pyramid of Ombos, find its secret entrance and free the god Horus to break a curse. Playing as Papyrus (and later as the Pharaoh's daughter Théti) you have to make your way through 21 stages, with such cheery titles as The Forbidden Forest, The Ocean of Oblivion and The Burning Cave. The game's reasonable length and solid platforming gameplay make it one of those European releases that North American players may want to track down. ■

FACT

The term 'bande dessinées' covers comics that were originally written in French for readers in France and Belgium, and includes all the examples listed above.

PERFECT DARK

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Rare Rare



RARE WISELY DECIDED that replicating its critically acclaimed N64 game's first-person viewpoint on GBC was a non-starter, so instead we have this prequel set a year before the events of the console title, which follows Joanna Dark on her first ever mission, where she has to travel to a jungle in South America and destroy a facility that's making cyborgs. The action is viewed from above, making it look more like a zoomed-in version of the GBC Metal Gear Solid game. The cartridge also makes use of just about every feature possible on the GBC, from rumble support to digitised speech, to a battery back-up for game saves, to the ability to use the Transfer Pak to unlock cheats in the N64 version. ■

FACT

As you play through the game you can collect 'Recon Photos' which show characters from the series. These can be printed using the Game Boy Printer, ticking off another supported feature.

PITFALL: BEYOND THE JUNGLE

Year 1998
Publisher Crave Entertainment / Interplay
Developer David A Palmer Productions

KNOWN ON PLAYSTATION as Pitfall 3D: Beyond the Jungle, this GBC adaptation accurately drops the 3D from the title because there's nary a third dimension to be glimpsed. It follows Pitfall Harry Jr as he takes on a mission to defeat the Scourge, an evil magician who's taken over another dimension (ironically). There are 14 stages to get through – four in the jungle, four in the caverns, four in a volcano and two in an interdimensional prison – before the final boss battle against the Scourge. Released just two weeks after the launch of the Game Boy Color, some critics felt that the game had been rushed a little, citing repetitive gameplay and a lack of diversity in its environments and enemies. ■

FACT

The game was set in another dimension because the development team felt there were no more genuinely unexplored lands left in the real world.

PLANET OF THE APES

Year 2001
Publisher Ubisoft
Developer Torus Games

ALTHOUGH RELEASED TO tie in with the *Planet of the Apes* remake directed by Tim Burton, this platformer is actually based more on the original 1968 film and its 1970 sequel *Beneath the Planet of the Apes*. You play as Ben, an astronaut who's been sent on a mission to find Taylor, the protagonist from the original movie. Over the course of 10 stages, Ben has to make his way through a desolate future Earth, collecting USNSA flags – the proof of Taylor's presence – along the way. The game is somewhat similar to Prince of Perisa in that Ben's animations are very smooth and deliberate, meaning half the gameplay revolves around simply getting him past each obstacle, before enemies are even taken into account. ■

FACT

It wouldn't be a Planet of the Apes film without a twist ending. Sure enough (spoilers), as Ben gets back into his ship at the end, he fails to notice a little chimp stowaway.

PLAYER MANAGER 2001

Year 2001
Publisher THQ
Developer G3 Interactive

IT WOULD APPEAR that football manager games run under some sort of Opposite World on the Game Boy Color, because while O'Leary Manager 2000 let you actually play the matches too, this game – which is literally named after footballers who both play and manage – doesn't. Instead, you choose from any team from the top two divisions in England, Germany, France, Spain or Italy and control all other aspects of the club, be that tactics, training, scouting, transfers, salaries, stadium earnings and the like. As well as half the title being inaccurate, there's also one other major issue: all the players and their names are completely fictional, which can make buying players a bit tricky. ■

FACT

The first Player Manager was released on the Amiga in 1990 by Anco, the studio behind Kick-Off. That one did let you play, but only for a few seasons until you retired and became a manager only.

POCKET BOMBERMAN

Year 1998
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Hudson Soft

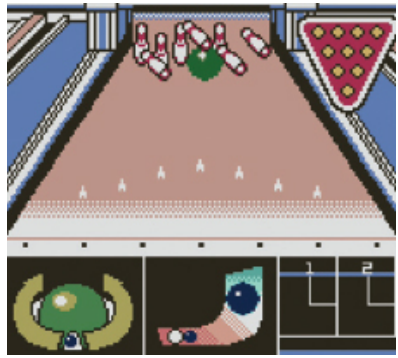
THE ORIGINAL RELEASE of Hudson Soft's quirky bomb-based Game Boy platformer Pocket Bomberman only made it to Japan and Europe, which means North American players missed out. While on one hand, then, you could argue that this Game Boy Color port is a bit of a missed opportunity because it's nearly identical to the Game Boy version (save for the addition of colour, of course), you could also argue that it's a positive release because it finally brings to North America a game it missed out on before. What's more, the GBC version offers support for the original Game Boy, meaning North Americans who hadn't yet made the upgrade were still finally able to play the game too. ■

FACT

The Jump Game minigame includes giant floating boss heads. These are actually the bosses from Virtual Boy game Panic Bomber being given a second chance at the spotlight.

POCKET BOWLING

Year 1998
Publisher Jaleco
Developer Athena



OF THE HANDFUL of bowling games available on the Game Boy and Game Boy Color, Pocket Bowling is certainly one of them. There are six characters to choose from – including an unlockable android bowler – each of whom have different stats for power, technique and ball weight (no giggling). You can take part in either a one-off game or a Tournament mode where you complete against a series of CPU opponents in four different alleys. The actual bowling gameplay is a simple timing-based affair, in which timed button presses set your bowler's position, their curve, their power and their accuracy. It's definitely one of the easier bowling games once it all clicks: in this writer's very first attempt, six out of my ten frames were strikes. ■

FACT

One of the characters is called Pen, and unless my eyes deceive me he's not a human at all, but a giant penguin (and is therefore the best character in the game by default).

POCKET MUSIC

Year Publisher Developer

2002 Rage Software Jester Interactive

WELSH GAME DEVELOPER Jester Interactive was best known for its Music series of song creation games on the PlayStation and PS2 (known in North America as MTV Music Generator), and this was an attempt to bring a handheld version to players so they could create their own beats on the go. Naturally, the main difference between jumping from a CD-based console to a cartridge is the quality of the music: like its predecessors the game involve placing samples from numerous music genres onto a simple music tracker, and arrange them in a way that makes a nifty beat, but the limitations of the GBC mean there are only 150 of these samples, limiting the possibilities somewhat. ■

FACT

The Game Boy Advance version of Pocket Music contains more samples (around 600) and includes a demo song, which is a recreation of 'My Name Is' by Eminem.

POCKET RACING

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Virgin Interactive

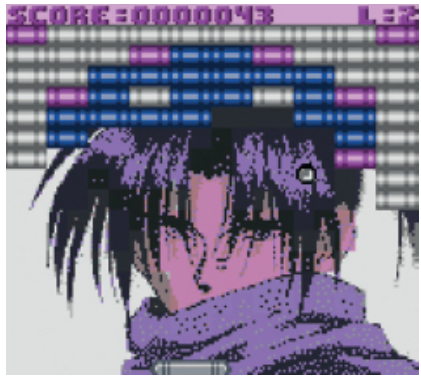
MTO BEFORE YOKOHAMA DEVELOPER MTO found critical and commercial success with the GT Advance series on the Game Boy Advance, it was responsible for this decent little racing game on the preceding handheld. Known as Pocket GT in Japan, the game starts you off with 16 cars, which eventually reaches 32 as you make progress. The game also has a nice variety of tracks, set in four distinct environments: professional circuit racing, highways, countryside and the city. The game's main mode, GT Park, has you playing through each of these tracks in order, unlocking them for use in Time Trial mode along the way. It doesn't do anything particularly remarkable in terms of features, then, but it does provide solid racing given the GBC's limitations. ■

FACT

MTO would go on to make five more 'GT' games: three GT Advance games on the GBA, GT Cube on the GameCube and GT Pro Series on the Wii.

POCKET SMASH OUT

Year 2001
Publisher Rocket Games
Developer Eleven Strong



OF THE EIGHT unlicensed games released by Rocket Games (aka Datel), it's probably fair to say that Pocket Smash Out is the least accomplished. The game is a basic blockbreaking game similar to Breakout or Arkanoid, but it's a rather clunky example of one. There are over 90 stages, each featuring different 'exciting Manga graphics' underneath the blocks, with the aim being to reveal all of the images. The problem is, this is easier said than done because it's pretty hard to aim the ball, given that it doesn't always bounce the way you'd expect it to based on where it hits the bat. Add to this the ball's tendency to pass through blocks as if they didn't exist, and there's frustration to be had here. ■

FACT

The initial press release promoting the eight Rocket Games titles called Pocket Smash Out 'a new take on the classic brick breaking genre', which I suppose is technically correct by definition.

POCKET SOCCER

Year Publisher Developer 2001 Nintendo Game-Play Studios

THIS HIDDEN GEM is one of the most in-depth football games on the Game Boy Color. There's a surprising degree of customisation here, especially in Playoff or League modes. After choosing one of the eight template teams, you can then change the team name and shirt colour, as well as the name and appearance of every player in your squad. Opt to play an Exhibition match instead and you have a choice of 32 preset teams, and a generous eleven types of pitch to play on, ranging from indoor offerings like a high school, a gym, a coliseum and an arena to outdoor locations like the street, a school playground or the beach. Gameplay has smooth animation and passing and shooting are satisfying and accurate. ■

FACT

Nintendo showed off Pocket Soccer at E3 2000 and said it had a Christmas 2000 release planned. Ultimately it was released in Europe in March 2001 and never made it to North America.

POKÉMON CRYSTAL VERSION

Year 2001
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Game Freak

THE JOYS OF alphabetical order mean that Pokémon Crystal has arrived in this book before Pokémon Gold and Silver have. Because this is an enhanced version of Gold and Silver, I'd recommend turning the page and reading about those first before popping back here. Released the year after Gold and Silver, Crystal is technically the third version but its extra additions and fixes mean it's arguably the one to go for. For roughly half the playerbase, the biggest addition by far is the addition to play as either a boy or girl Pokémon Trainer, adding a female option to the series for the first time. The game's storyline has also been tweaked in place, most notably to give more prominence to Suicune, the Legendary Pokémon that graces the cover of Crystal, and gives a better chance of catching it later in the game. Also new to Crystal is the addition of the Battle Tower (the first in the series), a special new building where players can take part in a series of increasingly difficult battles against new Pokémon Trainers in an attempt to win stat-building vitamins for their Pokémon. Many of Crystal's new features weren't available in the west because they were designed to work

with the Mobile System GB, a mobile adapter for the Game Boy in Japan which let players connect to a paid online service adding quizzes, mini-games and online trading and battling. Even without these features, though, Crystal is still an improvement over Gold and Silver. ■

FACT

The Battle Tower has some Trainers who are named after key developers. Guitarist Masuda is music director Junichi Masuda, and Bug Catcher Tajiri is Pokémon creator Satoshi Tajiri.

POKÉMON GOLD VERSION / SILVER VERSION

Year 2000
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Game Freak

GIVEN THE ENORMOUS global success of Pokémon Red and Blue on the Game Boy, it was inevitable that Nintendo and Game Freak were going to follow it up with a sequel on the Game Boy Color. Pokémon Gold and Silver improve on the originals in practically every way, to the extent that a lot of long-time fans still consider it one of the best in the series all these years later. Set in a new region called Johto, the general idea is still the same: collect Pokémon, train them in battles and build their strength in order to win the eight Gym Badges and defeat the Elite Four to become the Pokémon Master. It's everything else that's been added on top of that basic structure that made the game feel like such a large step forward. The number of Pokémon has been greatly increased from 151 to 251, including new Steel and Dark types. A new internal clock means the concept of time has been added, with playthroughs. On top of this, certain Pokémon can only be added to the Pokédex by evolving species you've already captured, which is carried out by hitting a more complex sequence of targets and lanes. The game's physics are a bit off and the included rumble support isn't used that

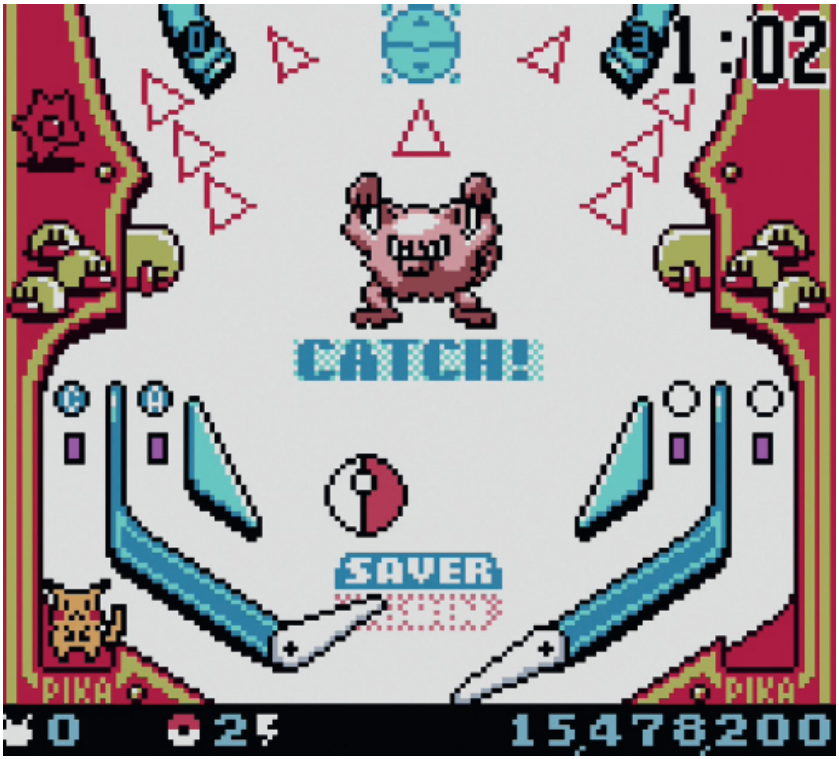
much, but Pokémon Pinball was nevertheless critically acclaimed, providing early proof that the Pokémon IP was prime material for spin-offs, no matter how left-field they may initially seem. ■

FACT

An early demo version shown at Spaceworld 1997 was leaked online. It contains loads of Pokémon that were never in the game, including two different starters: a fire bear and a water plesiosaurus.

POKÉMON PINBALL

Year 1999
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Jupiter Corporation



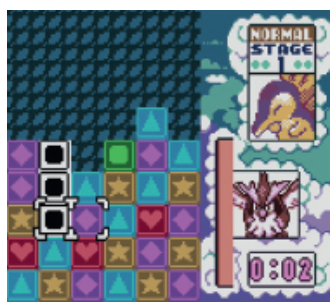
WHEN IT CAME to making a pinball spin-off of the Pokémon series, it could have been easy for developer Jupiter to put together a standard pinball game, slap some Pokémon sprites on it and call it a day. Instead, the studio put together a surprisingly compelling game that manages to take the series' 'Gotta Catch 'Em All' mantra and apply it to a genre that's usually associated with one-and-done play sessions. There are two tables available, Red and Blue, with each containing different Pokémon. In the middle of the table is a little screen which shows your location, and by activating different features on each table you can move onto different locations. Once the Catch Mode feature is triggered, that's when things get interesting: you get two minutes to hit the bumpers at the top of the screen six times, which in turn makes a Pokémon appear. By hitting the Pokémon a few times, you can then catch it and add it to a Pokédex which retains the information and can be updated over multiple

FACT

All 151 Pokémon are in the game but Mew is the only one you can't catch. Instead, when it appears (which in itself is an incredibly rare event), it's added to the Pokédex right away.

POKÉMON PUZZLE CHALLENGE

Year 2000
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Intelligent Systems



MUCH LIKE POKÉMON Puzzle League on the Nintendo 64, this is an entry in the Puzzle League series (known in Japan as Panel de Pon) which has been given a Pokémon theme (though this time it's based on the Gold and Silver games, rather than the N64 game's focus on the anime). The gameplay is typical Puzzle League fare (see Tetris Attack in the Game Boy section) split into six modes: an endless Marathon mode, a Challenge mode where you battle gym leaders, a Time Zone mode where you have two minutes to get a high score, a Line Clear mode with 30 set stages, a Puzzles mode where you have a limited number of moves and a Garbage mode, which is like Marathon but with garbage blocks in the way. ■

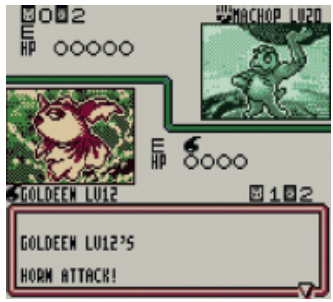
FACT

Put the cart in a standard Game Boy, and on the error screen press A 24 times then B 24 times to access a prototype Panel de Pon game,

showing how it was looking before the Pokémon crossover was added.

POKÉMON TRADING CARD GAME

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Nintendo Hudson Soft



AS ANYONE WHO knows their onions is aware, the video games are only half the story when it comes to the huge global success of Pokémon. The Trading Card Game (TCG) is immensely popular in its own right, and usually enjoys its own following separate from the world of video games. Back in the early days, however, Nintendo and Hudson Soft decided to try merging both by releasing a Game Boy Color version of the TCG, which teaches players how to play the game. The plot is similar to the games, but in card form: after choosing a starter deck, the aim is to defeat eight Club Masters, then the (elite) four Grand Masters to become the greatest Pokémon TCG player in the world. ■

FACT

The game got a Japan-only sequel, whose title translates roughly to Pokémon Card GB2: Team GR Appears. It's about a new gang called Team Great Rocket kidnapping Club Masters.

POLARIS SNOCROSS

Year 2000
Publisher Vatical Entertainment /
Developer Wanadoo Vicarious Visions

SNOWMOBILE RACING IS a niche that not many games fill, so Polaris SnoCross scores points for originality right off the bat, but it helps that it's a fun game too. You play as a wannabe snowmobile racer who's just passed their amateur certification and is now ready to take part with a humble standard Polaris chassis sled. By initially entering the Sport League, your aim is to do well enough to move up to the Semi-Pro and Pro Leagues, using your winnings to upgrade your sled, with the eventual goal being to win the whole ruddy thing. There are nine tracks split into three types: Snocross (defined courses with jumps), Cross Country (which have varied terrain) and Ovals (which are all about speed). ■

FACT

The European version, which is just called SnowCross, ditches all the Polaris branding but also removes the rumble effect.

PONG: THE NEXT LEVEL

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Hasbro Interactive
Morning Star Multimedia

I BET YOU didn't even know Pong had levels, did you? Turns out it still doesn't: this is instead a little compilation featuring four different variations on Pong. As well as Classic Pong (which is just the 1972 arcade version), there's Jungle Pong (where rolling logs can affect the direction of the ball), Arctic Pong (where there are penguins in the way) and Soccer Pong (where you have two sets of paddles). Other than the occasional power-up that's about it, which led to criticism about the game's limitations, as well as the fairly poor AI which struggles with angled shots even on Hard difficulty. What's more – and somewhat bewilderingly, given the whole point of the arcade original – there's no two-player mode. ■

FACT

Pong's initial success was even more impressive given how expensive it was to play. It cost a quarter per play in 1972, which was enough to get three plays on a pinball machine.

POOH AND TIGGER'S HUNNY SAFARI

Year Publisher Developer 2001 EA / Ubisoft Digital

Eclipse

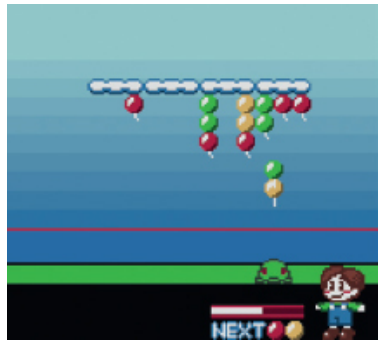
HAVE YOU EVER decided you want to just throw a party for the hell of it? Winnie the Pooh certainly has, which is why he and Tigger have come to the rather tenuous idea of having a Thursday Party to celebrate it being Thursday. There's just one problem: there are no guests, and there's no honey. Off jumps Tigger, then, to bounce through 18 locations in the Hundred Acre Woods, in which he has to find all the honey pots and look for other Winnie the Pooh characters along the way. There are five locations in the game – Spring Glade, Night Forest, Autumn Heights, Creepy Caves and Winter Woods – which is a surprising range of biomes for a place that's only supposed to be 100 acres. ■

FACT

Pooh gets in on the action during the game's bonus stages, where he flies around on a balloon throwing acorns at the bees who are trying to get back the honey that's rightfully theirs.

POP'N POP

Year Publisher Developer 2001 JVC Music Europe ITL



THIS INTERESTING ARCADE puzzler from Taito combines two of its most popular series – Space Invaders and Puzzle Bobble – and mushes them both together for a unique style of gameplay. Groups of coloured bubbles are moving side-to-side and downwards, much in the same way the aliens in Space Invaders move. As one of a selection of Taito characters (including Bubby from Rainbow Islands, Bob from Bubble Bobble, Tiki from The New Zealand Story and numerous others), you have to fire bubbles at them in an attempt to match three colours in a row and make them disappear. It's a curious way of combining both games, and is pretty good fun. Don't worry North American players, you didn't miss out: see Yogi Bear: Great Balloon Blast. ■

FACT

In early 2007, Nintendo listed a Wii version of Pop'n Pop, published by 505 Games, as an upcoming game. Taito seemingly pulled out and the game became the rather different Balloon Pop.

PORTAL RUNNER

Year	2001
Publisher	The 3DO Company
Developer	Handheld Games

THIS ACTION PLATFORMER is a spin-off of the Army Men series, ditching its standard green plastic soldiers in favour of a starring role for Vikki Grimm, the daughter of the colonel in the main games. Vikki's nemesis Brigitte Bleu has forced her through a portal, causing her to end up in a toy store (and remember, she's only a couple of inches tall). Vikki has to find her way home by passing through a series of portals taking her through a variety of locations such as a haunted castle, a jungle, a forest in a fantasy world and a spaceship. In each stage Vikki has to collect enough red gems before the portal to the next area can be activated. ■

FACT

The PS2 version was critically panned, leading to the leak of an email by 3DO president Trip Hawkins to *GamePro*, in which he threatened to pull advertising over its 2.3/5 score.

POWER QUEST

Year Publisher Developer

1998 Sunsoft Japan System Supply

WHAT IF YOU like the idea of RPGs like Pokémon but you have no interest in the turnbased system of battling? The solution may be Power Quest, an RPG in which battles are instead carried out as one-on-one fighting gameplay. You play as a young lad who's just received a model robot and is preparing to take part in a robot fighting tournament. As the tournament approaches you have to challenge other local robot fighters, while dealing with a side-plot involving a group of ne'erdo- wells called the Hyena Gang. As you win battles you earn money which can be used to buy new parts and upgrade your model. Thankfully, the fighting itself is solid, borrowing liberally from Street Fighter II (which is obviously no bad thing). ■

FACT

The Japanese version uses 'zenny' as its currency. That's because it was published by Capcom, which uses zenny in a lot of its games. For the west, it was changed to 'credits'.

POWER RANGERS: LIGHTSPEED RESCUE

Year 2000 *Publisher* THQ *Developer* Natsume

THE EIGHTH SEASON of *Power Rangers*, Lightspeed Rescue, featured a group of Power Rangers who all had day jobs that involve rescuing people (a firefighter, a lifeguard, a paramedic and… um, a stunt pilot and extreme sports athlete). This game sees them carrying out their rescue duties in five locations: a power plant, the city, a dam, the bay and the subway. Each area has three separate stages: one where you have to find and rescue 20 civilians before time runs out, one where you have to defeat 20 enemies and one where you have to defeat that area's boss in the Megazord. You can collect tools to help you, such as a drill to break steel walls and medicine to cure ill civilians. ■

FACT

One of the bosses is a tree demon called Treevil. The game was actually released before his episode aired on TV, meaning technically this was his *Power Rangers* debut.

POWER RANGERS: TIME FORCE

Year Publisher Developer 2001 THQ Natsume

TIME FORCE WAS the ninth season of *Power Rangers* and was about a group of Power Rangers from the year 3000 trying to protect their timeline (it goes all over the place, this show). The criminal mutant Ransik is being transported to a high-security prison when suddenly Ransik, the prison and all the inmates disappear. It seems Ransik has gone back in time and changed history, so the Power Rangers have to go after him to undo it. There are 10 stages set in a mix of the future, the past and the present day, and players have to complete each stage's platforming section, defeat the boss using the Megazord, then use the Vortex Bazooka to blast them back to their correct time zone. ■

FACT

There was supposed to be a Time Force movie but the failure of *Turbo: A Power Rangers Movie* saw it scrapped. Instead, the show's final four episodes were released as a movielength DVD.

POWER SPIKE PRO BEACH VOLLEYBALL

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Infogrames Spark

BEACH VOLLEYBALL GAMES aren't exactly uncommon, but how many actually go the extra mile and get a proper Federation of International Volleyball (FIVB) licence? Don't go counting, I don't actually want to know the answer: the important thing is that Power Spike is one of the few that does just that. This two-on-two beach volleyball game includes five men's teams and five women's teams from around the world, each made up of real FIVB players. Gameplay is initially straightforward but by winning tournaments you can unlock secret moves, such as a 360° smash, a power serve and a double-handed smash. It's so well-intentioned that I'll let it off for giving the US four out of the ten teams available. ■

FACT

The EU version was renamed Beach 'n Ball, and is missing the FIVB licence, meaning all the real players have been replaced with fictional ones.

THE POWERPUFF GIRLS: BAD MOJO JOJO

Year 2000
Publisher Bam! Entertainment
Developer Sennari Interactive

WHEN YOU'VE GOT a popular licence like The Powerpuff Girls, surely you make an action game in which all three girls have different abilities and you switch between them? Right? 'Not so', said Bay Area Multimedia, which instead decided to split the girls up and put them in three different games which could all connect with each other. In this first one, you play as Blossom as she takes on Mojo Jojo, who's broken into Professor Utonium's lab and stolen some of his experiments. Blossom can fly for a brief period of time, and can also use her ice breath to stop enemies in their tracks. Along the way you'll also find trading cards which can be collected, but more on that in the next entry. ■

FACT

The girls' names and colour scheme were based on Flora, Fauna and Merryweather, the three elderly fairies in Sleeping Beauty.

THE POWERPUFF GIRLS: BATTLE HIM

Year 2001
Publisher Bam! Entertainment
Developer Sennari Interactive

WHEREAS BAD MOJO Jojo starred Blossom, Battle HIM has you playing as Bubbles as she tries to stop the demonic HIM, who's captured her friends and hidden them in different parts of Townsville. The game plays just like Bad Mojo Jojo, even taking place in the same locations, except Bubbles uses a sonic scream attack instead of an ice attack. It's another big collectathon, and once again you can collect trading cards. The point is that you can connect the game to any of the other two games and trade cards with another player, but there's another twist to it: that's for the next entry, though. Hey, if they can spread one idea over three parts, so can I. ■

FACT

HIM is supposed to be the devil, but because it was decided that this was a tad too dark for a show aimed at children he was given a name that implies 'you all know who we mean'.

THE POWERPUFF GIRLS: PAINT THE TOWNSVILLE GREEN

Year 2000
Publisher Bam! Entertainment
Developer Sennari Interactive

IF BLOSSOM AND Bubbles got their own game then it stands to reason that Buttercup would get in on the action too. Paint the Townsville Green has Buttercup chasing after the Gangreen Gang, who are causing chaos all over Townsville (specifically, conveniently, the locations from the other two games). Once again the gameplay is identical to the other two games, except this time Buttercup has a laser vision attack. The trading cards are back, and here's that twist: there are 36 cards in total, and 12 are unique to each game, meaning you need to buy all three very similar games to collect them all. That's the sort of sinister ploy you'd expect from Mojo Jojo. ■

FACT

Sennari was given one more crack at a Powerpuff Girls game on the GBA with Mojo Jojo-A-Go-Go. This time it was wisely decided to release a single game with all three girls.

PRINCE NASEEM BOXING

Year 2001
Publisher THQ
Developer Virtucraft

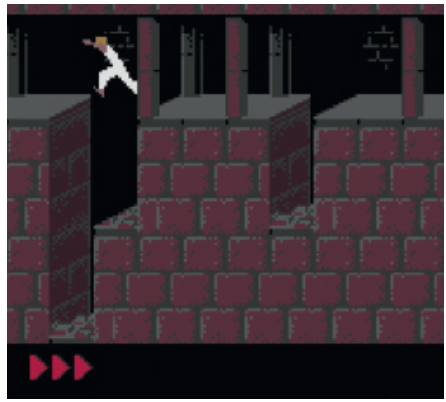
AT THE TURN of the millennium, there were few athletes (at least in the UK) who got as many headlines as Prince Naseem Hamed. The cocky young featherweight boxer won his debut fight at the age of 18 and for almost the next decade went on a 35-bout winning streak. With half of boxing in awe of him and the other half desperate to see him knocked out, the man was pure box office, which is why he was given the video game treatment, first on PS1 and then on the GBC. Played from an overhead perspective, the game lets you play as Hamed himself or a selection of other fictional boxers, with such stereotypical names as Slick Daddy Ellis (US), Alfie Miller (England) and Rab McCabe (Scotland). ■

FACT

The game's release was rather unfortunately timed. Just a few months earlier, Hamed suffered his first career loss and lost his title. He retired in 2002, aged just 28.

PRINCE OF PERSIA

Year 1999
Publisher Red Orb Entertainment
Developer Magnin & Associates



FOR THE MOST part this Game Boy Color version of Jordan Mechner's seminal platformer looks and plays just like the Game Boy version released seven years earlier. There have been a couple of little tweaks made here and there, however, beyond the obvious addition of colour. The ghost in the third stage of the Game Boy version has been replaced with the skeleton players were supposed to face, while the final battle with Jaffar no longer has him looking like a normal guard: he now has his own unique sprite and sword fighting technique. The most obvious addition, however, is a new Training stage which gives players an easier initial level to help ease them into the controls. ■

FACT

One other benefit of the GBC version is that the game has bottles of poison that look like health potions but are blue instead of red. It's impossible to tell which is which on the Game Boy.

PRO DARTS

Year 2002
Publisher Vatical Entertainment
Developer Vicarious Visions

THIS DARTS GAME offers six different types of rule sets for those who are fans of the oche. There's Cricket, Around the World and two variations of 301 and 501: one where you have to finish with a double, and one where you don't. The control system is particularly fiddly: first of all the player's hand sweeps quickly back and forth across the board diagonally, and you have to press the button to stop it. Then it sweeps diagonally in the other direction, almost as if you're setting the direction with an X. Then the hand tilts forwards and back, setting the throw height, before you set your power. The result is a throw that always feels completely random. ■

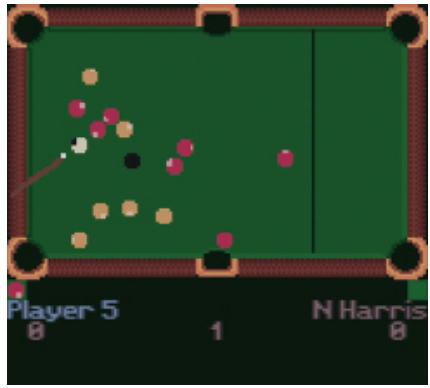
FACT

The back of the box rather oddly claims there are 'over six players to choose from'. I mean, there are eight, so technically it isn't wrong.

PRO POOL

✓ ✓ ✗

Year 2000
Publisher Codemasters
Developer Blade Interactive



THS POOL GAME is played from an overhead perspective, and while it doesn't allow for intricate control over your aim the number of modes it boasts goes some way to making up for this. There are eight different types of pool available, depending on your personal preference – UK 8-Ball, US 8-Ball, 9-Ball, Straight, 6-Ball, 3-Ball, Killer and Speed – as well as a Practice mode where you can just smack your own balls around (come on now, this is serious). There's also a Hustle mode where you start off with $100 and travel between different locations, challenging the locals (of whom there are more than 60) in an attempt to win more money and maybe even win ownership of the venue itself. ■

FACT

As a nice touch, the game has a constant autosave feature, so if you turn off the GBC, when you turn the game back on again it's ready to resume from the last shot you took.

PROJECT S-11

Year 2000
Publisher Sunsoft
Developer Paragon 5

WHEN A GAME has a name like a placeholder it should come as no surprise that it's not exactly the most innovative title on the Game Boy Color (in more ways than one). This vertically scrolling shoot 'em up has you playing as part of a 'top secret project' called S-11, and your role is to deliver technical documents to a secret base while destroying the enemy forces that stand in your way (well, fly in your way). That's all the plot you get, until the ending where you're credited with defeating 'the aliens of planet Cephei'. The game itself is straightforward, with five types of power-up to collect, but its main selling point is that its performance is extremely solid, with no flickering or slowdown of note. ■

FACT

Sunsoft held a competition asking players to name the game, as long as it started with Project. A chap called Chris Robertson came up with S-11, and got his name in the credits plus $200.

PUCHI CARAT

Year 2000
Publisher Event Evolution Entertainment ITL
Developer

PUCHI CARAT TELLS the story of a world where 12 precious gemstones can, if collected, make their owner's dreams come true. The characters in the game each have one stone, and are now trying to find the others. This is all an excuse for a Breakout game, albeit one with some unusual quirks. Rather than bricks you're breaking gems, and – much like the Puzzle Bobble games – if destroying some gems means the ones below them are no longer joined to anything, they'll fall off the screen (meaning it pays to aim high). It also doesn't give you lives like a standard Breakout clone does: instead, when you miss the ball, all the gems just drop down a line, with you getting Game Over if they hit the bottom. ■

FACT

The GBC version of Puchi Carat has 85 trading cards to collect. While these can be traded with other players wirelessly, it's not necessary: you can get them all on your own.

PUMUCKL'S ABENTEUER BEI DEN PIRATEN

Year 1999
Publisher Acclaim
Developer Neon Software

PUMUCKL'S ABENTEUER WAS a 1999 German animated series based on a 1961 radio play called *Meister Eder und sein Pumuckl* and the subsequent books, TV shows and movies it spawned. You play as Pumuckl, a red-haired kobold (which is a sort of mythical sprite) who likes to mess around. There's no time for that, however, as a blue klabautermann (which is a water kobold) has captured a kobold family and is holding them captive on his island. It's Pumuckl's job, then, to head out and rescue the family from the dastardly klabautermann. The game is an adventure played from an overhead perspective, and it has some puzzle elements which require Pumuckl to move rocks and dig holes to proceed at times. ■

FACT

Pumuckl's Abenteuer only lasted for 13 episodes, because it wasn't quite as popular as the earlier series that aired in the 1980s. It's no wonder: that was brilliant.

PUMUCKL'S ABENTEUER IM GEISTERSCHLOSS

Year	2000		
Publisher	Acclaim		
Developer	Neon	Software	

I KNOW FOR a fact that one Pumuckl game isn't enough to satiate even the least interested person, so it's nothing less than a saving grace that a second adventure followed a year later. Translated to Pumuckl's Adventure in the Ghost Castle, the game opens with Pumuckl receiving a letter from a bat, which invites him to Gruselzinne Castle. When he gets there, he realises that he's trapped in the castle, so he has to find a way to get out while messing with the evil spirits possessing the building. The game looks and plays similar to its predecessor, but this time Pumuckl is fighting against ghosts, jumping pumpkins, witches and the like, using such weaponry as vacuum cleaners, magnets and garlic slingshots. ■

FACT

Pumuckl's creator sued his illustrator after she held a competition to let fans design Pumuckl's girlfriend. He argued that Pumuckl didn't have a gender, and couldn't marry. He lost.

PUZZLE MASTER

Year 1999
Publisher Metro3D
Developer Metro3D

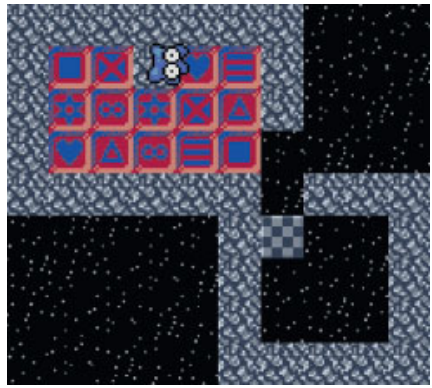
AT FIRST GLANCE, Puzzle Master looks like yet another clone of Columns, Puyo Puyo or Dr Mario, but it's actually got a little more to it. Granted, at its core it is indeed a block-dropping game in which you have coloured blocks (representing each of the elements) and have to match four of the same colour to clear them. Things get more interesting, though, with the addition of external factors messing things up, like the enemies who turn up and throw indestructible skulls onto the playing area. You can use power-ups like bombs and daggers to deal with these enemies, but can also use them on the playing area itself to clear some space when things are getting too frantic. ■

FACT

There are other little setpieces during gameplay which can make things interesting. If you clear four water blocks next to a hanging flower pot, for example, it'll grow and give you a powerup.

PUZZLED

Year 2001
Publisher Conspiracy Entertainment
Developer Elo Interactive



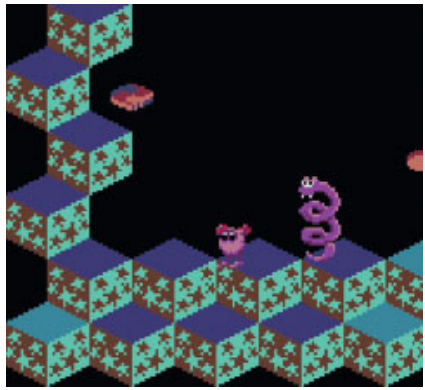
THE NEFARIOUS PROFESSOR Evil has used a transdimensional reality convertor to turn your previously human character into a little blob, and has sent him to the Riddle Zone, an alternate dimension. The only way you can go back to your regular human self is to make your way through all 150 levels in the Riddle Zone. Ignore all that nonsense, though: the point here is that each stage of this puzzle game has to be cleared both figuratively and literally: you have to remove every element from the stage before you step on the exit (which you still have to be able to reach, incidentally). A wide range of tile types and gimmicks makes Puzzled an appropriate title, because this is no walk in the park. ■

FACT

Before he came up with the concept for Puzzled, developer Thomas Brockhage also designed Logical (see earlier in the book), so the guy had a knack for hurting brains.

Q*BERT

Year	2000
Publisher	Hasbro Interactive
Developer	Pipe Dream Interactive



THE GAME BOY Color version of Q*bert has nothing to do with the Game Boy version released eight years earlier, and is a completely new port of the arcade classic. The basic aim is still the same: Q*Bert has to colour all the tiles on each stage by hopping on them, while avoiding enemies. However, as well as an Arcade mode which plays more or less the same as normal Q*Bert there's also an Adventure mode where Q*Bert has to explore five different worlds (while still changing the colour of the cubes, of course). What's more, Q*Bert is now joined by a female character called Q*Dina, meaning those in favour of gender equality can now be confused about what she's supposed to be too. ■

FACT

By entering the password BR&ND@R@ CKS you can unlock a secret image of the programmer's dog Brando along with a message saying 'Brando says 'woof'.

QIX ADVENTURE

Year 2000
Publisher Event
Developer Evolution Entertainment Taito

IF THERE'S ONE thing arcade and Game Boy action puzzle game Qix needed, it was a storyline. That's actually not true at all but it didn't stop Coconuts Japan having a crack at it anyway. You play as Speedy, a young chap who's been tasked with collecting treasure for… some reason or another (the game's English translation is quite ropey). The game's main mode, Treasure, has you doing just that: it plays exactly like normal Qix does (see the entry in the Game Boy section for details), but this time there are also treasure chests which can be collected by drawing boxes around them. There's also a standard mode if you just want plain old vanilla flavoured Qix without any extra sprinkles. ■

FACT

Qix Adventure's visual design was by Masayoshi Suto, who would go on to work on the Megami Tensei series, including as art director on Persona 5.

QUEST: BRIAN'S JOURNEY

Year 2000 *Publisher* Sunsoft *Developer* Atelier Double

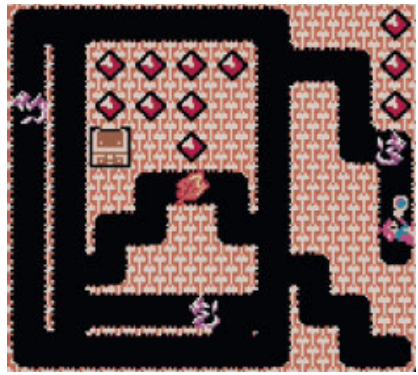
BRIAN'S JOURNEY IS a sort of heavily downscaled retelling of the events of Nintendo 64 roleplaying game Quest 64. As in that game, you play as Brian, an apprentice mage who's looking for his father, who's also a mage but has left the village in search of whoever stole the Eletale Book, whose removal has caused great anguish across the land. Brian still has four elemental skills, which can be levelled up independently by not only fighting enemies but also collecting little white wisps of energy he finds dotted around the land. The result is a relatively solid 'demake' of the N64 title, though it does beg the question of whether fans of the N64 game should therefore bother playing this. ■

FACT

If you think Brian's Journey is a rather mild name for a game, may I direct you to the Japanese title, Elemental Tale: Jack's Great Adventure: Satan's Counterattack.

QUEST: FANTASY CHALLENGE

Year 1999
Publisher Sunsoft / Virgin Games
Developer Imagineer



IF BRIAN'S JOURNEY was one of the most predictable ways to bring Quest 64 to the Game Boy Color, Fantasy Challenge is one of the least. The easiest way to describe the game is to direct you to the entry for Mr Do! in the Game Boy section of this book, because Fantasy Challenge is as shameless a knock-off of the 1982 arcade game as you'll ever see. There's no plot whatsoever: you simply control Brian as he navigates through 20 stages, with the aim being to collect all the diamonds in each stage. Enemies approach him, as in Mr Do!, and he can throw a ball at them which takes a while to regenerate, as in Mr Do!. It's Mr Do!, basically. ■

FACT

The game is known as Holy Magic Century in Europe, which is the same name Quest 64 had there. Imagine the confusion when comparing them both.

QUEST FOR CAMELOT

Year 1998
Publisher Titus Interactive /
Developer Nintendo Titus Interactive

BASED ON THE 1998 animated movie by Warner Bros, Quest for Camelot has you playing as Kayley, a young adventurer who has to save the kingdom of Camelot by finding a way to get hold of the magical sword Excalibur. The game is a rather crude (as in basic, not naughty) overhead adventure game in the style of 2D Zelda, consisting of eight stages and numerous boss battles against the likes of a plant beast, a mechanical ogre, a flying dragon and the main bad guy, the evil knight Ruber. Quest for Camelot was ultimately only met with a tepid reception (as was the film), with critics bemoaning its repetitive gameplay and character designs that looked nothing like the movie's. ■

FACT

Warner Bros cochairman said they rushed the film even though 'the producer was wrong and the script wasn't ready', resulting in a box office bomb that lost more than $40 million.

R-TYPE DX

Year 1999
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Bits Studios

WHEN NINTENDO AND Bits Studios brought R-Type to the Game Boy Color, they didn't mess around. R-Type DX technically has five games on the one cartridge, all of which can be selected from a menu when you boot it up. There's the original Game Boy versions of R-Type and R-Type II (which are the only ones which work on the Game Boy, obviously). Then there's enhanced Game Boy Color versions of both games. Finally, there's R-Type DX itself, which combines both games into one super-length game for the ultimate challenge (and the highest score, naturally). Another major improvement is the addition of optional rapid fire modes for the colourised and DX versions, which certainly saves your Game Boy's 'A' button from a heavy duty bashing. ■

FACT

Beat R-Type, R-Type 2 and R-Type DX to unlock the De Souza Editor, a fun little tool that lets you make your own images from the sprites and tiles stored in the game.

RACE TIME

Year Publisher Developer 2001 Rocket Games DAG

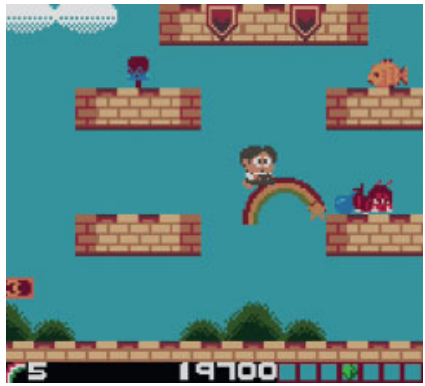
ANOTHER OF THE eight unlicensed Game Boy Color games released by Rocket Games, which was secretly Datel with a fake moustache on. It's a rather basic overhead racing game in the style of Micro Machines, which lets you choose between four different cars (Purple Fury, Desert Turbo, Jade Racer and Magenta, if you're asking) and race them on six rather oddly named tracks, including the likes of Holiday Villas, Refinery, Desert Oasis, Future Park, Pressure Bowl and Rally Track. The handling is reasonable enough – there's even a wee bit of powersliding in there – and even though the default settings play a fast enough game there are three further speed settings, in case you prefer your racing games to be unplayable. ■

FACT

Race Time can usually only be found in a twopack along with Pocket Smash Out, meaning you have to put up with the worst of the eight games if you want to get it.

RAINBOW ISLANDS

Year 2001
Publisher TDK Mediactive
Developer Taito



FRESH FROM THEIR heroics in Bubble Bobble and restored back to their human forms, Bubby and Bobby are floating around with their umbrellas when they meet the president of Rainbow Island, who tells them monsters have invaded. The pair (even though the game's singleplayer only) head out to save the day. The main gameplay mechanic in Rainbow Islands is the ability to fire rainbows, which kill enemies if they hit them while being created. You can then walk onto them and use them as platforms for a limited time, or jump onto them to make them collapse and kill enemies underneath (though this is a little glitchy in the GBC version). There's a bonus tenth island in this version, based on the Taito game KiKi KaiKai. ■

FACT

While the arcade game's music was based on 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow' from *The Wizard of Oz*, the GBC version just loops the Bubble Bobble theme over and over again.

RAINBOW SIX

Year	2000
Publisher	Red Storm Entertainment
Developer	Crawfish Interactive

THE TACTICAL SHOOTER series based on Tom Clancy's technothriller novel is a rather complex experience on consoles and PC, so bringing it to the humble Game Boy Color must have been one hell of an undertaking. The result isn't terrible, and stands alone as a separate take on the series rather than an attempt to replicate the console versions (thankfully). Ditching the first-person viewpoint for an overhead view which makes the game look more like the GBC Metal Gear Solid, you nevertheless still have to sit through a briefing for each mission, get your intel, choose your eight-person team, select and assign their kit and plan the route in advance. The reduced detail means in some missions you can just ditch the plan and go it alone. ■

FACT

Clancy came up with the name Rainbow Six by combining Demond Tutu's 'Rainbow Nation' nickname for post-apartheid South Africa, with the American rank code for captain, O-6.

RAMPAGE: WORLD TOUR

Year 1998
Publisher Midway
Developer Digital Eclipse

THE ORIGINAL RAMPAGE was created by Bally Midway in 1986 and released in arcades and numerous home consoles and computers. This sequel may have come more than a decade later, but other than its snazzier new visuals – which make use of pre-rendered graphics to give a pseudo 3D effect similar to the likes of Donkey Kong Country – the gameplay still hasn't really changed much. You still choose between giant ape George (definitely not based on King Kong, please don't sue them), giant lizard Lizzy and giant werewolf Ralph, and still have to smash all the buildings in each stage to proceed, while avoiding the military onslaught sapping your energy, and while eating those tiny, pesky humans to top it up. ■

FACT

There's a hidden twoplayer Link Cable mode, which is unlocked if both players hold Select on the title screen and press Up, Down, Left, Right, Down, Up. It's a bit glitchy, as if it's incomplete.

RAMPAGE 2: UNIVERSAL TOUR

Year 1999
Publisher Midway
Developer Digital Eclipse

TECHNICALLY THE THIRD game in the Rampage series despite what that title is trying to tell you, Universal Tour opens with George, Ralph and Lizzy imprisoned in New York, London and Tokyo respectively. An accident at the Scumlabs science facility, however, leads to the release of three new giant monsters: Boris the rhino, Curtis the mouse and Ruby the lobster. At first you have to travel round the world and free the original trio (unlocking them for play) but then the story continues, eventually taking you to space and unlocking a seventh character, a big green cyclops plant alien thing called Myukus. Thankfully it turns out other planets have skyscrapers too, so the building-smashing can continue across the universe. ■

FACT

It's often assumed that Lizzie is based on Godzilla, but her designer Brian Colin says she's actually based on the Ymir from *20 Million Miles to Earth*. Seems nobody told this game's devs, hence her being in Tokyo.

RAMPART

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Midway Digital Eclipse

WHILE THE ORIGINAL Game Boy got a new interpretation of Rampart by Jaleco which added the ability to choose different generals with various abilities, Digital Eclipse's Game Boy Color port is far more faithful to the original arcade version, right down to the use of the same voice samples shouting 'ready, aim, fire' and 'cease fire'. The action is zoomed out a lot more than in the Game Boy version, making it look more like the arcade game in which you could see both your castle and the oncoming enemies at the same time (instead of having to scroll the screen between them both). A twoplayer battle mode is also available, using the Link Cable. ■

FACT

The Game Boy Color version adds new difficulty settings that other ports of the game don't have. On its easiest setting it's possible to beat the game and see the ending in a matter of minutes.

RATS!

Year	1998
Publisher	Take Two Interactive
Developer	Tarantula Studios

RATS! HAS ALREADY appeared in this book's Game Boy section under its European title, Reservoir Rat. Whereas that version was only released in Europe, the Game Boy Color version also made it across the pond to North America, albeit with a new title to potentially make it more legally distinct from Reservoir Dogs. That legal caution doesn't appear to have extended to the soundtrack, which still includes the same questionably similar rendition of the Peter Gunn theme from *The Blues Brothers*, though it has at least been pushed back to later in the game. Indeed, everything else about the game is practically identical to the standard Game Boy release, other than the reshuffling of the music tracks. ■

FACT

These days, Tarantula Studios is known as Rockstar Lincoln and has helped with the development of games like GTA V and Red Dead Redemption 2.

RAYMAN

Year 2000
Publisher Ubisoft
Developer Digital Eclipse

WHEN THE EVIL Mr Dark kidnaps guardian of harmony the Great Protoon, and traps all the land's Electoons in cages, it's up to the limbless Rayman to save the day. The aim in this platformer is to free all the Electoons by finding their cages, though not all the cages can be opened right away because some require Rayman to earn new abilities (such as a helicopter spin and a ring-grappling move) and come back later. The Game Boy Color version is based on the original Rayman game on PS1, Saturn and Jaguar, but because of the handheld's limitations it's a significantly cut down affair. Most of the friendly characters Rayman encounters in the console version are gone, as are most of the boss fights. ■

FACT

Ubisoft was worried that Rayman's four fingers would offend Japanese players because of stereotypes about the Yakuza, so it gave him five fingers in the Japanese version.

RAYMAN 2 FOREVER

Year Publisher Developer 2001 Ubisoft Ubisoft

KNOWN SIMPLY AS Rayman 2 in North America, this is technically based on the 3D platformer Rayman 2: The Great Escape but is naturally a completely different game because it resorts to 2D side-scrolling. This time Rayman has to find the four Masks of Polokus and use them to find and defeat the evil pirate Razorbeard. the GBC version looks and plays very similarly to the first Rayman (for better or worse: there are still very few boss fights in here), though there are some differences. For starters, this time Rayman has all his abilities from the start of the game. The small blue crystal balls that could be collected in the first game are now replaced with yellow Lums, of which there are 800 to collect. ■

FACT

The Japanese Rayman 2 gives Rayman four fingers again. Ubisoft decided its previous fears were unfounded because characters like Mario and Mickey Mouse were loved in Japan.

RAZOR FREESTYLE SCOOTER

Year 2001
Publisher Crave Entertainment
Developer Crawfish Interactive

KNOWN SIMPLY AS Freestyle Scooter in Europe (because apparently scooter manufacturer Razor USA hadn't quite cracked that market yet), this was yet another attempt to grind the Tony Hawk rail and grab a piece of the extreme sports video game market, albeit via the slightly less extreme sport of scooting. The game's main mode is Championship, where you race against seven opponents in the suburbs, a playground, a forest, the park, the city, a scrapyard and a funfair. While the aim is obviously to finish first – the higher you rank the more points you get – the player who scores the most trick points along the way also gets bonus points. There's also a separate Trick mode if you aren't interested in racing.

FACT

Both modes earn you money which can be used to buy new shoes, pads, forks and wheels. These apparently boost your stats but I couldn't tell much difference to be honest.

READY 2 RUMBLE BOXING

Year 1999
Publisher Midway
Developer Crawfish Interactive

THIS HANDHELD PORT of Midway's over-the-top boxing game zooms the action out to show almost the entire ring, making it easy to move around. Seven of the console versions' boxers make it to the GBC (with three more unlockable ones), and as they make their way to the ring the game shows off a rather impressive FMV clip, along with ring announcer Michael Buffer's digitised voice. The in-ring action assigns the B and A buttons to your left and right hand respectively, while holding a direction on the D-Pad changes the type of punch you throw. The game was criticised for its limited features, however: Arcade mode just features single fights while Championship is a simple series of fights. There's also no two-player Link Cable mode. ■

FACT

True to its name, the GBC version of Ready 2 Rumble is one of a handful of games with rumble functionality built into the cartridge, so you can feel the action as you play.

RETURN OF THE NINJA

Year 2001
Publisher Natsume / Ubisoft
Developer Act Japan

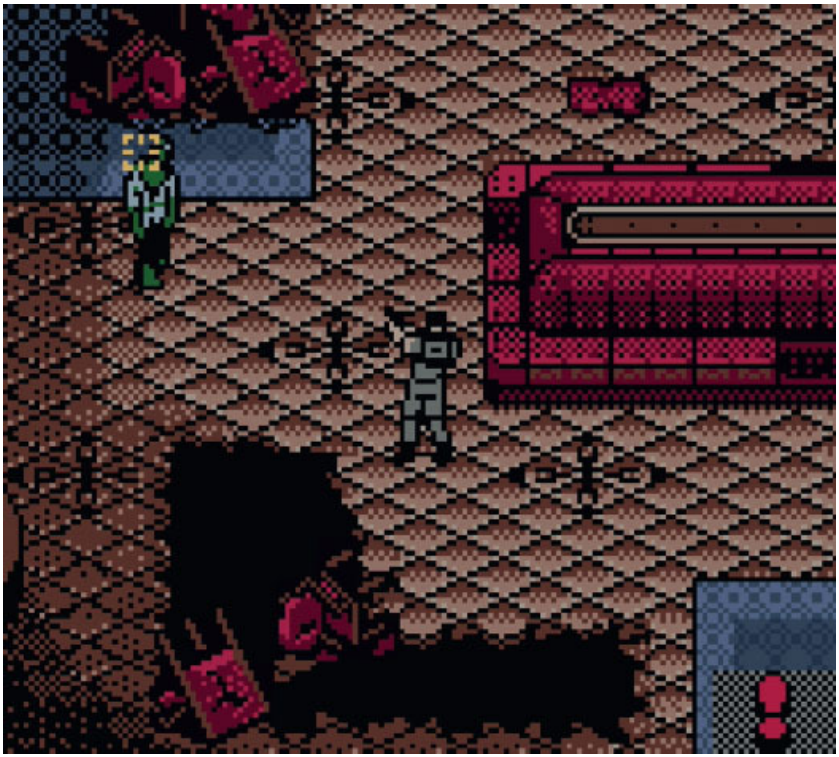
WHEN NINJA PAIR Tsukikage and Sayuri return to their village after a busy day's ninjaing, they find it ablaze. Descendents of the ninja clan Iga had attacked the village while they were away, and stolen its ancient scroll so it could start a new age of wars. Far from chuffed, the pair set out to get the scroll back and ninja the hell out of the bad guys. Return of the Ninja lets you play as either character: Tsukikage can throw shuriken as a special attack, while Sayuri has a boomerang. At the end of each stage, you're given a rank based on how quickly you beat the level and how many enemies spotted you, and are then given collectible cards for hitting certain ranks. ■

FACT

The title appears to imply that it's a follow-up to Natsume's 1991 NES game Shadow of the Ninja, but in reality the two games play very differently.

RESIDENT EVIL GAIDEN

Year Publisher Developer 2001 Capcom / Virgin Interactive M4 Limited



LONG BEFORE RESIDENT Evil Revelations saw players exploring a zombie-ridden ship, this Game Boy Color exclusive did it first. The game opens with a viral outbreak on a passenger liner called the *Starlight*. Resi 2 hero Leon heads to the ship to investigate, but after a while contact is lost with him so Resi 1's beardy sidekick Barry Burton is sent out to find him and figure out what the Dickens is going on. Before long Barry finds both Leon and a young orphan girl called Lucia, who for some reason has the ability to sense a new bio-organic creature that's also roaming the ship. Hijinks ensue, naturally. Given that it could be hard to aim at zombies and other creatures in a game with a zoomed out overhead viewpoint and a low display resolution, Gaiden comes up with an interesting workaround. Any time you engage your sights with an enemy, the game switches to a separate screen where you see the enemy (and any that are nearby) from a first-person perspective as a little cursor moves back and forth at the bottom. If you can press the button as the cursor passes a mark, you'll hit the enemy. Miss, and they'll come ever closer. While there were some elements of the game that

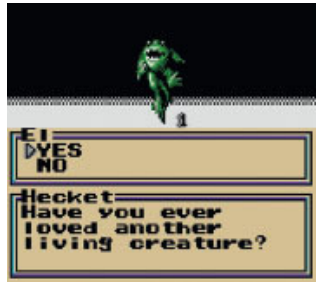
didn't really fit well with the handheld environment – most notably the fact you can only save at certain points, which doesn't really suit five-minute bursts on the move – Gaiden is nevertheless an interesting side-story with a fun combat mechanic. ■

FACT

A separate Game Boy Color port of the original Resident Evil was in development but was cancelled at the prototype stage. It's since leaked online and is extremely impressive.

REVELATIONS: THE DEMON SLAYER

Year 1999
Publisher Atlus
Developer Multimedia Intelligence Transfer



EL IS A student learning about Gaia, a special set of powers that the gods used to be able to harness. On the day of his graduation, the sky turns dark and mysterious creatures arrive, causing havoc. Off goes El to figure out what's going on and who could be behind it. Revelations is a typical turn-based RPG which borrows from Pokémon by allowing you to collect the monsters you fight. What's interesting is the way you do this by talking to the monsters and trying to win them over with words, eventually convincing them to fight alongside you. There's something oddly endearing about fighting a flying beast with huge teeth, only to down tools and have it ask: 'Don't you think things have been a bit chaotic lately?' ■

FACT

Revelations was actually designed to be a more family-friendly spinoff of the Megami Tensei series. Its Japanese title is Megami Tensei Gaiden: Last Bible.

RHINO RUMBLE

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Telegames Formula

ROCKY THE RHINO is really rattled. He's eaten a hot pepper at a jungle party and now he's breathing fire, so he has to make his way through 19 stages in search of a magical waterfall which will extinguish his burning breath (I don't know why he couldn't just drink milk like the rest of us). For some reason, there are all manner of creatures trying to stop Rocky as he makes his way through the Jungle, Desert, Cave, Snow, City and Cloud areas, but given that the whole plot revolves around the fact that the lad is literally spitting fireballs, it should be obvious what your main means of attack is in this game. ■

FACT

The game's music is composed by Jeroen Tel, the legendary Dutch chiptune composer who made such well loved C64 game soundtracks as Cybernoid, Myth and RoboCop 3.

RIP-TIDE RACER

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Cryo Interactive Cryo Interactive

THIS TOP-DOWN RACING game is set in the future, where the entire world has become flooded (they should have listened to Greta Thunberg). Rather than moping around, however, a group of racers decide to make the most of the increased moisture and take part in a series of hoverbike races. There are three types of armoured hoverbike to choose from, and two game modes. Despite the name, Time Trial is actually the main championship mode, in which you race against three other ships while firing guns at each other, across eight different tracks. Deathmatch mode, meanwhile, does away with the racing element and focuses purely on the gunplay, as you try to blow up everyone around you. ■

FACT

Cryo had part ownership in US publisher DreamCatcher Interactive. In

an interesting turn of events, when Cryo went bankrupt, DreamCatcher took over, forming DreamCatcher Europe.

ROAD CHAMPS: BXS STUNT BIKING

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Activision HotGen

RELEASED A YEAR before the Game Boy Color version of Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX, Road Champs is basically its predecessor, offering similarly complicated but in-depth cycling mechanics. Developer HotGen clearly knows its game isn't the easiest to get to grips with, which is why before you can access the game's Career or Tournament modes you have to complete Training mode, which consists of no fewer than 30 tutorial stages and takes the best part of an hour to get through as you learn the minutiae of its controls. Once you finally make it through that, you have eight fictional bikers to choose from as you make your way up the ranks from amateur to pro and attempt to become the BXS Champion. ■

FACT

If you're not familiar with it, Road Champs BXS was a series of miniature bike toys made by Jakks Pacific. They were the BMX equivalent of those little finger skateboard things.

ROAD RASH

Year 2000
Publisher Electronic Arts
Developer 3d6 Games

THIS PORT OF EA's brilliantly punchy motorbike racing game is completely different to the Game Boy version, mainly because it's actually a port of Road Rash 2. The five tracks in the game – Hawaii, Arizona, Alaska, Vermont and Tennessee – match those of the second game, as do other features that were added to it (such as the ability to grab different weapons from opponents, like pipes and chains). The aim is the same as in its predecessor: win races while punching people along the way, and earn cash to spend it on new bikes. One of the big selling points of the Mega Drive version of Road Rash II was a new two-player mode so, sure enough, this GBC version also adds Link Cable support. ■

FACT

Due to a rare startup bug, the Game Boy version of Road Rash is one of two known official GB games (along with Japanese RPG Zerd no Densetsu) that don't work on the Game Boy Color.

ROADSTERS TROPHY

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Titus Software Titus Software

THIS HANDHELD TAKE on Titus's N64, PS1 and Dreamcast racer is obviously very different in terms of look and feel, but also suffers big losses in other areas. The game features 12 tracks, and the aim is to score points to rank high in the league, while also earning money to upgrade your car: not just the prize money you get for winning races, but also the extra money you get by making bets with your rivals. Unfortunately, whereas the console versions of Roadsters boasts a selection of around 35 cars once everything's unlocked, the Game Boy Color version gives you a single car to upgrade (one with an annoying engine noise, at that) with no option to buy a new model. ■

FACT

The game's upgrades include snow tyres, which the manual says will give 'extra grip in icy conditions', but there aren't actually any snow tracks in the game.

ROBIN HOOD

Year 2001
Publisher Electronic Arts
Developer Planet Interactive

UNLIKE THE ROBIN Hood game on the standard Game Boy, this one has nothing to do with the *Prince of Thieves* movie starring Kevin Costner, and is instead an original take on Robin Hood. The game is played from an overhead perspective like the 2D Zelda games, and Robin heading out to defeat the Sheriff of Nottingham, who's raised taxes so high that the poor can't afford to eat. The game takes place across 19 stages, with such locations as Ottoman Prison, a haunted forest and the catacombs. Oh, and halfway through the story Maid Marian – who's Robin's fiancée in this version – gets kidnapped, just in case robbing from the rich and giving to the poor isn't enough motivation. ■

FACT

Maid Marian has been a popular feminist character over the years because she's almost always depicted as strong and independent. So a fiancée damsel in distress isn't really the norm.

ROBOCOP

Year Publisher Developer 2001 Titus Software Mirage Interactive

THE CITY OF Detroit is on its backside, partly thanks to a gang war. One of the leaders, Nexx, has been overseeing the looting of labs around the city, so RoboCop is sent to deal out some justice. Meanwhile, a new supercomputer called the Mind has been created by the notorious OCP, but is secretly hacking into networks around the world. If you don't think RoboCop has to deal with that at some point too, you've got to wonder why I'd bring it up. The game is played from an overhead perspective and has RoboCop exploring eight stages, each populated with both enemies and civilians. Luckily, when you aim at them, a scanner at the bottom of the screen tells you which is which. ■

FACT

Titus was also making a GBA RoboCop game at the same time as the GBC one. It was going to play like the original 1988 runand- gun arcade game, but was cancelled.

ROBOPON: SUN VERSION

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Atlus Hudson Soft

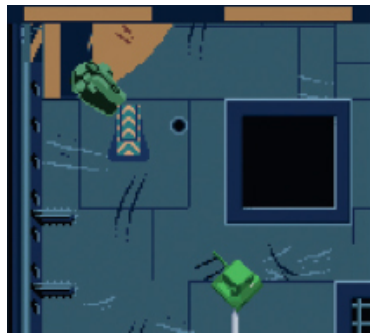
OF ALL THE Pokémon imitations on the Game Boy Color, Robopon has to be the most blatant. You play as Cody, a young lad who lives on Porombo Island, where humans and robotic creatures called Robopon live together in harmony. After getting his first Robopon, Cody decides he wants to become the ultimate Robopon Pro by defeating the Legend 7, who aren't gym leaders, honest. Cue an RPG adventure in which you catch, train and battle robots in turn-based combat, all of which is highly familiar. The game does have one (rather odd) unique feature: by pointing a TV or VCR remote control at the infrared port on the top of the cartridge and pressing a button, you can initiate a 'GB Kiss' which gives you a bonus. ■

FACT

If you're wondering where the other versions are, Star and Moon were only released in Japan. This means you can't actually collect all 153 Robopom, because some are exclusive.

ROBOT WARS: METAL MAYHEM

Year Publisher Developer 2000 BBC Multimedia Tiertex



BASED ON THE cult BBC television show (but sadly missing the presence of Craig Charles), Robot Wars: Metal Mayhem lets you choose from a collection of pre-designed robots or create your own in the Robot Workshop mode (by picking different parts). There are four trials you can put your robot through: a slalom race, a skittle-hitting challenge, a sumo battle and the Gauntlet assault course from the show. If that's not Wars-y enough for you, there's also the Grudge Match mode, where your robot goes one-on-one against another one in a battle to the death. Or whatever death is for a robot. The range of weapons is sadly limited, including a pneumatic spike, a hammer, a saw and a flipper. ■

FACT

The only way robots can be flipped over in the game is by driving over the spikes in the arena, so if you give your custom robot a flipper weapon it's completely useless.

ROCKET POWER: GETTIN' AIR

Year Publisher Developer 2001 THQ Tiertex

ROCKET POWER WAS an animated series on Nickelodeon in which a group of four friends played extreme sports together. Naturally, the combination of cartoon tie-in and extreme sports – the two genres that feature most on the Game Boy Color – meant a Rocket Power game was inevitable. Gettin' Air consists of four separate events, each starring a different character. Reggie takes part in snowboarding, Sam takes to the waves for some surfing, Twister rides a BMX and Otto does a spot of rollerblading. There's a reason for all this: Reggie is trying to put together a 'zine in which she's covering all the sports her friends are taking part in, so you need to get a high enough score in each event to make the 'zine worth reading. ■

FACT

Nickelodeon once teamed up with Amazon to let customers order custommade DVD-Rs with *Rocket Power* episodes on them, through Amazon's CreateSpace selfpublishing service. Legal bootlegs, what a world.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN TROPHY HUNTER

Year Publisher Developer 2000 WizardWorks Xantera

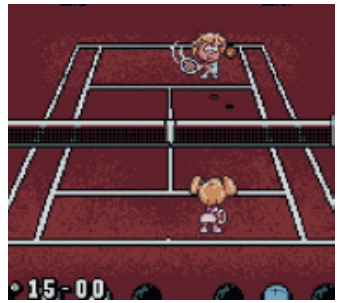
IF YOU'VE EVER dreamt of hunting animals atop a rocky mountain, while continually missing the things despite swearing your crosshair is pointing right on them, this is the game for you. With stages in Colorado, Montana and New Mexico, you can grab your weapon of choice – be that a scoped rifle, a muzzleloader, or a bow and arrow like you're a cosplay Lara Croft – and try to take down the elk, deer, bears and bighorn sheep wandering around. If you're struggling to get your target to come close enough for a good shot, you can use calls or an attractant to catch their attention, or a cover scent to stop them thinking 'Hang on, I'm sure I can smell someone holding a Game Boy Color'. ■

FACT

PC version developer Sunstorm Interactive managed to fire out four Rocky Mountain Trophy Hunter games in three years, until the series got a bullet in the head. Don't worry, it didn't feel it.

ROLAND GARROS FRENCH OPEN

Year	2000
Publisher	Cryo Interactive
Developer	Visual Impact



AT FIRST, THIS appears to be a relatively strait-laced tennis game, albeit one with some questionable design choices. There are four tournaments to play – the officially licensed Roland Garros French Open, plus the English, US and Australian Opens. There are also five fictional players, who all oddly look like children, but that's by the by. It's when you start winning these tournaments where things start getting a little odd, as you start to unlock more tournaments set on the beach, in the middle of a street, in the Antarctic and on the Moon. You can also unlock a playable alien. Nothing wrong with all of this, of course, but those looking at the box and title and expecting a serious tennis sim may be confused. ■

FACT

The Roland Garros French Open takes its name from the tennis stadium where it's held, which was named after an aviator and fighter pilot who was shot down in World War I.

RONALDO V-FOOTBALL

Year 2001
Publisher Infogrames
Developer Bit Managers

BACK AT THE turn of the millennium there was only one Ronaldo, and he didn't pull his shorts up like a weirdo any time he took a free kick. Ronaldo V-Football (or Ronaldo V-Soccer in North America) was named after the Brazilian superstar and features a total of 74 international teams and 44 club teams: the latter have fake club names, meaning Arsenal are named Highbury and so on (though Celtic and Rangers are Glasgow A and Glasgow B, as it should be). If you plan on adding it to your collection of football games, get the European release, because all its player names are real, whereas in the North American release only the Brazil national team has real names. ■

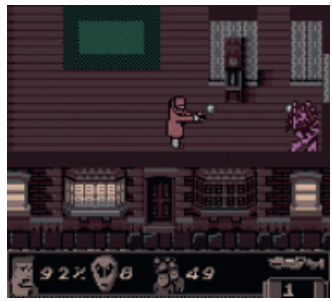
FACT

Hidden in the data for GBC game Tintin in Tibet are smatterings of code that appear to refer to a Game Boy Advance version of Ronaldo V-Football which never happened.

ROSWELL CONSPIRACIES: ALIENS, MYTHS & LEGENDS

Year 2001
Publisher Red Storm Entertainment
Developer Crawfish

Interactive



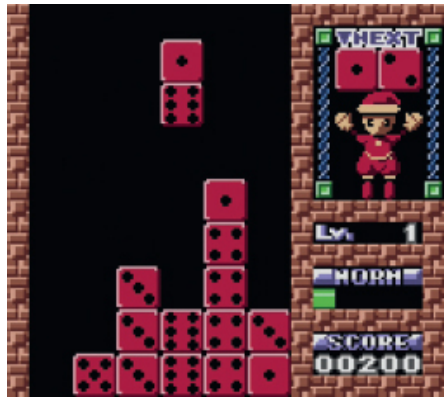
ROSWELL CONSPIRACIES WAS an animated series based on the idea that the alien landing at Roswell and Area 51 was a government-created distraction from the truth, which is that aliens have been here for centuries. The game has you playing as Global Alliance Agent Nick Logan as he travels to various alien-related incidents in London, Ireland, New Orleans, San Francisco and finally Roswell itself. Much of the game involves scanning humans to reveal which ones are aliens in disguise, then killing them. Each location has two missions, followed by a driving mission where you return aliens to your base, fight a boss then drive to the next destination. Meaning the real conspiracy here is how he manages to drive from Ireland to New Orleans. ■

FACT

A polygonal thirdperson action game based on the same show was released on the PS1. A port was planned for the N64, but was cancelled.

ROX

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Titus Software Altron



ROX IS YET another attempt to take on Tetris, albeit one that will have you scratching your head a little more than usual. Instead of normal, nondescript blocks you have to deal with a steady stream of falling dominoes. The aim is still to clear them but the process to do so is tricky: you have to put two blocks of the same number at either end of a stack containing that number of blocks. Naturally, that's beyond confusing on paper, so as an example, if you have a block with a 4 on it, you have to put four random blocks next to it, then another 4 at the end to clear them all. If you have a 1, you only need to put one block next to it, then another 1. The game later adds colours to make it even more bewildering. ■

FACT

The EU box makes no bones about challenging Tetris, calling it an 'innovative Tetris-like game' and saying it 'takes Tetris to new dimensions'.

RUGRATS IN PARIS: THE MOVIE

Year 2000
Publisher THQ
Developer Software Creations

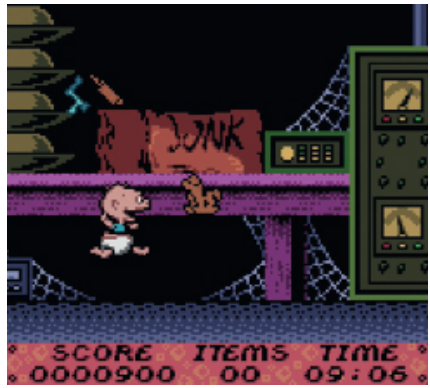
BASED ON THE second Rugrats movie, this uses the same platforming engine as The Rugrats Movie and Time Travelers but also adds a bunch of mini-games due to the game's setting, which is a theme park called EuroReptarland. The platforming levels have you flipping switches in a rocket ship, moving mirrors in a pyramid, riding a ghost train, exploring a ninja pagoda and eventually making it to Notre Dame Cathedral to stop Chuckie's dad getting married. The seven mini-games can be unlocked by collecting tickets, and include such activities as hitting moles, catching fish, throwing basketballs, hitting a target with a hammer to ring a bell and that theme park classic, throwing bean bags at sumo wrestlers.

FACT

Rugrats in Paris was planned for the Dreamcast, but was cancelled. This means the Dreamcast got no Rugrats games, while old greedy-guts GBC sat there with four of the sods.

THE RUGRATS MOVIE

Year 1999 *Publisher* THQ *Developer* Software Creations



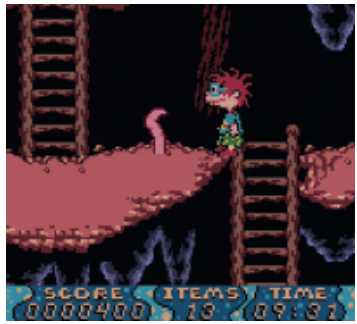
RELEASED JUST A few months after the standard Game Boy version, the Game Boy Color version of The Rugrats Movie is practically identical in every way, except it adds colour. In fact, seemingly the only actual difference is during the opening titles, where a single extra screen is added at the start for the developers who carried out the colour conversion. Other than that, it's like for like. The Game Boy Color version has support for the standard Game Boy version – including the same Super Game Boy support with a special Rugrats border – so if you have to fulfil a loved one's oddly specific dying wish by collecting every Rugrats Game Boy game, you can get this one and ignore the standard Game Boy one.

FACT

Never underestimate the selling power of the Rugrats: the movie was the first non-Disney animated film to gross more than $100 million in the US alone.

RUGRATS: TIME TRAVELERS

Year 1999
Publisher THQ
Developer Software Creations



THE RUGRATS, STARS of the long-running Nickelodeon cartoon, have found a time machine in a toy store. No doubt realising this provides an extremely convenient way to add diverse level design to an otherwise straightforward platform game, the kids step through the portal and are sent to different time periods. Chuckie (who's the timid type) starts at the Toy Shop and eventually ends up in the 1800s Gold Rush. Tommy works his way through Ancient Egypt, the Wild West and Atlantis. Phil goes to prehistoric and medieval times, Lil visits a fairy tale world and a pirate ship, Angelica goes to the circus and Dil is on the Moon. Each stage requires the player to find a special item or one of the other babies to continue. ■

FACT

Although the game is compatible with the original Game Boy, playing on the GBC unlocks four bonus levels where you have a time limit to score as many points as possible.

RUGRATS: TOTALLY ANGELICA

Year 2000
Publisher THQ
Developer Tiertex

IS ANGELICA YOUR favourite Rugrat? No? Oh. Well, this is awkward, because she's the sole star of this game, in which she's lost her doll Cynthia in the mall and has to find her. Starting on the first floor of the mall, you have to enter each shop and play a mini-game to unlock new fashion items. Once you have them all, you need to put on a fashion show for the other babies, and if they like your outfit you get to move up to the next floor, repeating the process until you reach the fifth floor and find Cynthia. Mini-games include hunting bugs with Phil and Lil, moving a ball of yarn around a maze, catching cookies and – of course – the legally obligated matching and tile-sliding puzzles. ■

FACT

Totally Angelica includes the Angelicomm, which lets players type messages and beam them to other players who also have the game. It probably didn't get used much.

SABRINA THE ANIMATED SERIES: SPOOKED!

Year 2001
Publisher Simon & Schuster Interactive
Developer WayForward

THE SECOND OF two games based on the cartoon version of *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*, both of which can be considered the start of a run of brilliant platformers by WayForward Technologies that has lasted decades. Sabrina's aunts are behaving odd, but there's a good reason for it: they're sleepwalking. Before Sabrina can sort it out, they both sleepwalk into a magic portal, which is actually a trap set by the villainous Spooky Man. It's up to Sabrina and her cat Salem to travel through four worlds and collect the crystals they need to stop the Spooky Man. You play as both Sabrina and Salem, swapping between them with the Select button. This is somewhat underrated, especially given WayForward's eventual status as a platforming powerhouse. ■

FACT

Melissa Joan Hart, who played Sabrina in the live-action show, was producer of the animated show. The voice of Sabrina, then, was performed by her younger sister Emily Hart.

SABRINA THE ANIMATED SERIES: ZAPPED!

Year	2001
Publisher	Simon & Schuster Interactive
Developer	WayForward

A YEAR BEFORE Spooked!, GBC-owning Sabrina fans were treated to Zapped!, which is basically the same sort of game (no bad thing, given the developer). In this one, Sabrina gets stage fright when performing at a school talent show, so she tries to perform a spell to make the crowd cheer and instead turns them all into animals. Love interest Harvey is now a crocodile, her best friend Chloe has become an octopus, snobby kid Gem is a bird and school bully Slugloafe is a gorilla. Sabrina has to find the animals in each stage, bounce on their heads to stun them, then zap them back into humans again. Once all the animals in a stage have been transformed, the door to the next stage opens. ■

FACT

The show got a sequel series in 2003 called *Sabrina's Secret Life*. One episode copies this game's plot, except Sabrina turns everyone into monsters instead.

SAN FRANCISCO RUSH 2049

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Midway Handheld Games

THE THIRD GAME in Atari Games' series of arcade racers, San Francisco Rush 2049 differs from its predecessors Rush and Rush 2 in that it's set in the future (I'll let you guess which year), allowing for all manner of big jump shenanigans. Such shenanigans are downplayed somewhat in the GBC version, which naturally ditches the polygonal chase view from the arcade and console versions in favour of an isometric perspective, and also features no jumps. What it does have dotted around each of its nine tracks, however, is little flaming tyre power-ups. Race over these and your car will get a huge burst of speed, making them all but essential to finishing in first place in each race. ■

FACT

A GBC version of the original San Francisco Rush was in development at Digital Eclipse but was cancelled. The prototype was leaked online in 2022.

SANTA CLAUS JUNIOR

Year	2001
Publisher	JoWooD Productions
Developer	Neon Studios

ON CHRISTMAS EVE, a young lad called Nick is playing his Game Boy (the cartridge reads ‘Neon’, naturally). Nick is startled when a fairy falls from the sky and lands right next to him, along with a Santa suit. The fairy explains that Santa has been kidnapped by an evil witch (and stripped of his clothes, presumably just for the purposes of the story). She asks Nick if he can put on Santa’s clothes and head out to rescue him, and thankfully he does otherwise it wouldn’t be much of a game. This is a rather straightforward but harmless platformer in which Nick simply has to get through every stage. There are presents in each stage: collecting them earns you a Sound Test when you beat the game. ■

FACT

Neon released a sequel called Santa Claus Jr Advance, which is the same sort of idea but with improved graphics and a wider range of stages.

SCOOBY-DOO! CLASSIC CREEP CAPERS

Year 2001 *Publisher* THQ *Developer* Software Creations

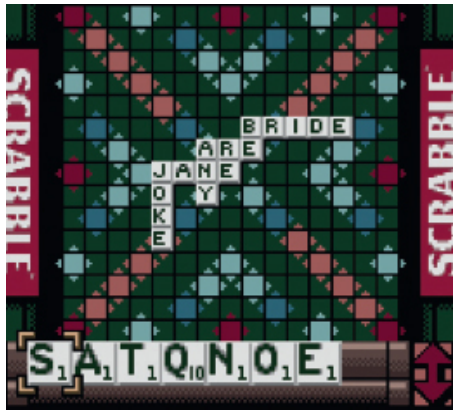
ALTHOUGH A NINTENDO 64 game by the same name was released a few months earlier, this GBC title is nothing like it at all. Whereas the N64 one was based on four *Scooby-Doo* episodes, the GBC game focuses on a single different one, Nowhere to Hyde, and splits it into six separate chapters. In it, the gang explores a mansion while investigating a jewel thief who looks like the ghost of Mr Hyde. The game is a modified point-and-click adventure, in that there's no pointing or clicking: instead, you walk your characters around and interact with the objects and people they stand next to. All six members of the gang can be controlled, and can all travel to different rooms of the mansion. ■

FACT

The game's code contains a hidden cutscene in which a series of bad guys' masks are pulled off and are revealed to be each of the game developers instead.

SCRABBLE

Year Publisher Developer 2001 Ubisoft Runecraft



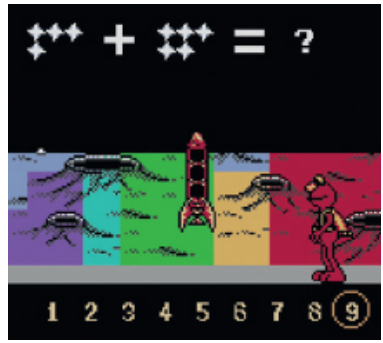
UNRELATED TO SUPER Scrabble on the original Game Boy, this is arguably the better offering despite the lack of a Super moniker, mainly because it adds an extra mode. As with Imagineering's Game Boy title, you have the option to play against a friend or an AI opponent (or even on your own if you just want to practise). The main difference here, however, is the addition of a mode called Conundrum, in which you're given a single line with the various score multipliers on it and have to make the best word you can for that line. Again, this can either be played alone for a high score, or with other players, with the twist being that everyone gets the same tiles. ■

FACT

I hope you like 'Air on the G String' by Bach, because it plays all the way through the game. Old Brits like this writer will also know it as the tune from the Hamlet cigar ads.

SESAME STREET: ELMO'S 123S

Year 1999
Publisher NewKidCo / Ubisoft
Developer Bonsai Entertainment



THERE WERE FOUR *Sesame Street* games released on the Game Boy Color. Naturally, Elmo's 123s focused on teaching children about numbers, with four minigames based on numeral correspondence, counting, adding and subtraction, and recognising number patterns. The story goes that a UFO has arrived above Sesame Street and has started turning off all the lights on the street. By taking on the four mini-games – counting the stars in the sky, sending a spaceship into orbit, adding groups of stars together and subtracting groups of stars – the aliens will eventually warm to Elmo and turn the lights back on. The graphics are basic and Elmo walks like he's had an accident after being tickled one too many times, but it serves its purpose. ■

FACT

At the time of writing, no episode of *Sesame Street* 'has been brought to you by' a number higher than 40.

SESAME STREET: ELMO'S ABCS

Year 1999
Publisher NewKidCo / Ubisoft
Developer Bonsai Entertainment

IF YOU CAN count to 10 with the best of them but can't string a sentence together to save your rump, Elmo's ABCs may be of greater interest. Or maybe not, because there's much less variety here than there was in the numbers game. While there are six mini-games here it's technically only one game: Elmo is (very) slowly juggling balls while a letter is shown on the bottom on the screen. When the ball with a matching letter passes over it, you have to press the A button. That's it. The only difference in the six mini-games is the format of the letters: either both are upper case, both are lower case, they're mixed, they form a short word or they represent the first or last letter of a word. ■

FACT

Michael Jackson's music library, which owned The Beatles' music, sued the show for $5.5 million for its song 'Letter B' (based on 'Let it Be'). The Beatles wrote a letter defending the show and it was settled for $500.

SESAME STREET: THE ADVENTURES OF ELMO IN GROUCHLAND

Year 1999
Publisher NewKidCo / Ubisoft
Developer Bonsai Entertainment

IF YOU'RE A big fan of *Sesame Street* and Elmo but already have the literacy and numerical skills of a genius (or even just a 7-year-old) then The Adventures of Elmo in Grouchland may be more suitable. Rather than another educational game, this is a platformer based on the 1999 live-action movie of the same name. Elmo's beloved blue blanket has blown away in a gust of wind, and when he chases after it he finds himself falling through a portal in Oscar's trash can and ending up in his hometown, Grouchland. Elmo has to run and jump through eight stages, taking in all the sights and sounds (and smells, no doubt) of Grouchland before the final confrontation at the house of the greedy Grouch, Huxley. ■

FACT

On the set of the *Sesame Street* show, puppeteers have to crouch below ground level. For the film, the street was recreated on a higher sound stage so they could stand upright.

SESAME STREET SPORTS

Year 2001
Publisher NewKidCo / Ubisoft
Developer Bonsai Entertainment

GIVEN THAT THEY'RE all Muppets and therefore controlled offscreen by humans, the *Sesame Street* characters aren't usually the most active bunch. That all changes in Sesame Street Sports, where six characters (*sans* humans) take on their favourite pastimes for your playing pleasure. Ernie is racing down the river in his bathtub, Telly is skiing downhill in a snow saucer, Cookie Monster is jumping around the park on his space hopper, Grover is racing a unicycle at the beach, Zoe is riding a big wheel around a dirt track and Elmo is skating around the city on in-line skates. Because the game is aimed at young children, all six events have the same basic controls, letting them move left, move right and jump. ■

FACT

To answer the song 'can you tell me how to get to Sesame Street': Take the V train to Steinway Street, get off at 34th Ave, walk to 36th St then turn left into Kaufman Astoria Studios in Queens.

SGT ROCK: ON THE FRONTLINE

Year 2000
Publisher Bam! Entertainment
Developer Altron

IN 1982, TAITO released its groundbreaking arcade game Front Line, which was one of the first overhead run ‘n gun shooters. It was overtaken in popularity by games like Commando and Ikari Warriors, so when it was resurrected in 2000 it was decided to apply an IP to it to make it more appealing. Oddly, that IP was the rather niche DC Comics war hero Sgt Rock, but you take what you can get, I suppose. As in the original, the game has Sgt Rock travelling through a series of stages taking on a steady stream of enemies, and jumping into vehicles like tanks, jeeps and gunboats along the way. It doesn’t have the arcade original’s fun little dial for aiming and firing, but is otherwise a reasonable reboot. ■

FACT

The Japanese version ditches all the Sgt Rock branding and calls it like it is, sticking with the old guard and going with the name Front Line: The Next Mission.

SHADOWGATE CLASSIC

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Nintendo Infinite Ventures

SHADOWGATE WAS ORIGINALLY a black and white point-and-click adventure released on the Mac, before it was given the colour treatment for an NES release a couple of years later. In it, you play as a nameless hero who has to navigate Castle Shadowgate's numerous booby traps as you try to find and defeat the Warlock Lord before he can summon a huge monster called the Behemoth and use it to destroy the world. This Game Boy Color port, released a decade after the NES game, is heavily based on that version and at first glance appears to be a straight conversion. In reality, though, the illustrations of each room and character sprites have been redrawn, making for a generally better-looking game than the NES version. ■

FACT

In the early 1990s Scholastic published a series of video game novels called *Worlds of Power*. One of these, *Before Shadowgate*, served as a prequel to Shadowgate.

SHAMUS

Year	2000
Publisher	Vatical Entertainment / Telegames
Developer	Junglevision Software

THIS STRANGE RELEASE is based on a 1982 shooter which originally came to Atari 8-bit computers before being ported to other home computers and then, 17 years later, the GBC for some reason. You play as Shamus, a robot detective who's trying to reach the lair of the archvillain The Shadow. There are four worlds in the game containing a total of 128 rooms, and you have to blast your way through enemies while collecting keys in order to proceed. The game itself is fine but the art style is odd: the Shamus sprite has been made much larger than it was in the past but many enemies have remained untouched, giving the game an odd '80s retro look but one that makes it less playable than it used to be. ■

FACT

Shamus's weapon is called the Ion-Shiv, which stands for 'Ionic Short High Intensity Vaporizers'. He can only fire two at a time: you know, since they're so ionic and stuff.

SHANGHAI POCKET

Year 1998
Publisher Sunsoft
Developer Sunsoft

WHILE SUNSOFT'S SHANGHAI game on the original Game Boy nailed that 'one more go' sweet spot, its single tile layout made it somewhat repetitive. Shanghai Pocket improves on its predecessor in numerous ways, not least because there are now three separate game modes. The Shanghai mode is the same single-player gameplay as usual, but now with 12 different layouts and five tile designs to choose from. Kong Kong is a new versus mode where you and an opponent (either the CPU or another player with a Link Cable) try to clear their board first, while also clearing 'Attack Tiles' to send more tiles to their opponent's screen. Finally, Gold Rush is another versus mode, where players rush to clear the hidden golden tile first. ■

FACT

There's actually a plot now. The 12 animals of the Zodiac have lost their power so you have to complete each of their stages to restore it (hence the 12 different stage layouts).

SHANTAE

Year 2002
Publisher Capcom
Developer WayForward

ALTHOUGH DEVELOPER WAYFORWARD had previously released three platformers on the GBC (all of which starred witches for some reason), Shantae has retrospectively been identified as the first game that established it a master of the platforming genre, even though at the time it was generally ignored due to the GBA's release. You play as Shantae, a half-genie who has to stop the evil pirate Risky Boots, who wants to take over Sequin Land. As she explores the game's stages, taking in five towns and four labyrinths, Shantae can learn new dances which can magically transform her into other creatures – a monkey, elephant, spider and harpy – each with their own unique powers. the GBC cart is rare but it did get rereleased on Switch, PS4 and PS5. ■

FACT

Shantae is one of only a handful of games that adds new features when played on a GBA. It adds a new Tinkerbat transformation that lets you fly. It breaks the game a bit, but hey ho.

SHAUN PALMER'S PRO SNOWBOARDER

Year 2001
Publisher Activision
Developer ITL

IN AN ATTEMPT to make lightning strike… um, I think this was the third time after the Mat Hoffman game, Activision once again tried to capitalise on the success of its Tony Hawk games by signing up another extreme sports athlete. The game lets you play as one of four pros – Shaun Palmer himself, Tara Dakides, Ingemar Backman and a 14-year-old Shaun White – as you take on your choice of four mountain tracks: the Alps, Gotcha Glacier, Aspen and Heavenly Valley. There are three main game styles: a side-on viewpoint for Freestyle events (where you try to score big) and Palmer X events (racing against others), and a viewpoint behind your boarder for the big Superpipe events. ■

FACT

Shaun White would grow up to be one of the most prolific snowboarders, and eventually got his own video game seven years after Palmer's was released.

SHREK: FAIRY TALE FREAKDOWN

Year 2001
Publisher TDK Mediactive
Developer Prolific

IT'S NOT CLEAR who thought the best way to make use of the Shrek licence on Game Boy Color was to turn to one of the genres that's traditionally been handled least well on the handheld, but a 2D one-on-one fighter it is. Fairy Tale Freakdown lets you initially choose from one of six fighters – Shrek, the Wolf, Pinocchio, Robin Hood, Princess Fiona and Thelonius (the masked guard in the castle) – but while playing through the game you also unlock the Gingerbread Man, the Dragon and Lord Farquaad. The game is very basic as far as fighting games go, with only six attacks per character (one kick, one punch, two air moves and a couple of special moves) and an inability to duck. ■

FACT

The manual dedicated a whole page to Donkey with big smiley artwork, mainly to tell readers that 'the Donkey is not a playable character in this game'.

THE SIMPSONS: NIGHT OF THE LIVING TREEHOUSE OF HORROR

Year 2001 *Publisher* THQ *Developer* Software Creations

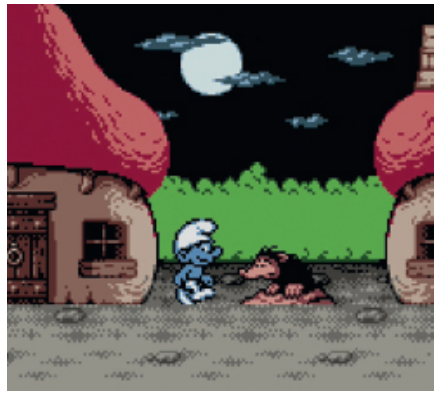
THE ‘TREEHOUSE OF Horror’ episodes are often the highlights of each season of *The Simpsons*, so this game idea was a no-brainer (which will frustrate the zombies in it). Like the show, it’s an anthology of stories, with each making up a level, using the same platforming engine as most of the Rugrats games. Missions include Bart saving his dog Santa’s Little Helper from a haunted house, Maggie turning into a fly and trying to change back, Marge fighting zombies in the streets, Homer looking for vampire Mr Burns in a dungeon, Lisa trying to rescue school kids from cages, a robot Homer looking for his human body parts and a King Kong Homer rescuing Marge by punching buildings and fighting the army. ■

FACT

The first ‘Treehouse of Horror’ aired in 1990 and spoofed *Poltergeist*, *The Amityville Horror*, *The Twilight Zone* and Edgar Allen Poe’s ‘The Raven’.

THE SMURFS’ NIGHTMARE

Year 1999
Publisher Infogrames
Developer Bit Managers



BECAUSE THE SECOND and third Smurfs games on the Game Boy were never released in North America, this GBC port of the third one ditched The Smurfs 3 from the title and presented it simply as The Smurfs' Nightmare. As with numerous other Game Boy to Game Boy Color transitions, there's little to separate the two versions here other than the final, definitive proof that yes, the Smurfs were supposed to be blue all along in the Game Boy game. The only notable difference – and even then, it's very minor – is that the Game Boy version had rather awkward fading transitions between menus and scenes, and those are replaced here with straight cuts from one to the other. ■

FACT

The original French description of the Smurfs says they're 'three apples high'. Fans in other nations took this literally, but it's just a French saying similar to 'knee-high to a grasshopper'.

SNOOPY TENNIS

Year 2001
Publisher Infogrames
Developer Mermaid Studios

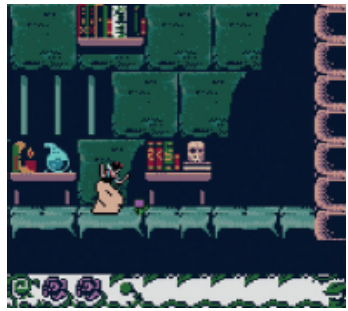
IT'S GENERALLY AGREED that Mario Tennis is the best tennis game on the GBC, but there's an argument to be made that Snoopy Tennis is the second best, at least in terms of how solid its gameplay is. The game features eight characters from the *Peanuts* comic – Snoopy, Charlie Brown, Lucy, Linus, Franklin, Sally, Schroeder and Peppermint Patty – with the ability to unlock Woodstock, Pig-Pen and Marcie. There are also nine distinct courts: four 'pro' ones designed to look like Wimbledon, the US Open and the like, four set in the *Peanuts* universe (Snoopy's Backyard, the beach, the school bus and the forest) and a 'squash' court where the net is lodged between two walls. More importantly, its controls are rock solid. ■

FACT

If you want something sillier, the game's Power mode adds eight power-ups which can be collected, with effects ranging from speed-ups to bending the ball to freezing it in mid-air.

SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS

Year 2001
Publisher Ubisoft
Developer Planet Interactive



MADE TO TIE in with the release of the Platinum Edition DVD of Disney's 1937 classic, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs is a mix of platforming stages and mini-games. The game's main Story mode alternates between the two over the course of its seven chapters, making 14 'stages' in total. In the platforming stages, Snow White (or, once she's asleep later in the game, Grumpy) has to collect a set number of objects, be that roses, butterflies, diamonds or what have you. The mini-games range from making your way out of a maze, repeating a melody that's played to you, guiding a deer through the woods to warn the dwarfs of danger and – of course – the inevitable pair-matching and tile-sliding puzzles. ■

FACT

Walt Disney wanted Snow White's singing voice to sound so unique that he made Adriana Caselotti sign a contract agreeing she wouldn't sing in any more movies ever again.

SOCCER MANAGER

Year 2000
Publisher Acclaim
Developer Broadsword Interactive

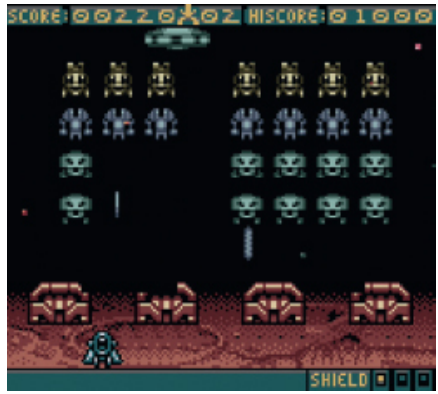
COMPARED TO THE other two football management games on GBC, Soccer Manager is significantly more bare-bones. You get to choose from any team in the top four tiers of English football – there are no other countries represented here – and are then given your target (be that winning the league in three seasons if you're in the Premiership, or getting to the top-flight in six seasons if you're in the fourth tier). All the player names are real, but their abilities are represented by a single number, meaning there isn't really much to go on when scouting. Matches are also a simple affair, with basic text commentary under a diagram of the pitch, with a blue bar showing roughly where the ball is. ■

FACT

This is the only Game Boy or Game Boy Color game released in the west that has absolutely no sound whatsoever.

SPACE INVADERS

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Activision Crawfish Interactive



THE ORIGINAL 1978 version of Space Invaders has gameplay that still holds up to this day, yet despite this, numerous ‘modern’ versions released over the years have failed to build on it in an enjoyable way. This GBC take does a good job, however, with new features that improve things without going over the top. A double-tap with the D-Pad performs a new sideways dash that gets you out of trouble. There are now three ships to choose from, with their own stats for weapon, shield and dash. Destroying the motherships that fly past will reward you with power-ups, including special shots that can take out multiple aliens at once. There are also 150 stages, split into 10 planets, with a boss fight at the end of each. ■

FACT

Once you reach the Uranus stage you’ll face off against the deadly Kamikaze enemy type, which will fly directly towards you once you hit it, in an attempt to take you both out.

SPACE INVASION

Year 2001
Publisher Rocket Games
Developer Thalamus Interactive

THE LAST OF the eight unlicensed games by Rocket Games (aka Datel) to feature in this book and arguably the best, Space Invasion is a blatant Space Invaders knockoff – right down to the name – but a competent one with just enough tweaks to make it different. The game is split into five stages, each of which has a different background and is split into 10 waves for a total of 50 waves. The aliens are a little more varied than in Space Invaders, with 20 different types appearing over the course of the game. Some fire lasers and some drop bombs, and each stage presents them in a different layout to mix things up a bit. In all, it's far from the worst unlicensed game ever made. ■

FACT

Thalamus re-released Space Invasion in 2023, selling a PC port on itch.io for $1.99.

SPACE MARAUDER

Year 2000
Publisher Agetec
Developer KID

ALTHOUGH THE TITLE for Space Marauder implies some sort of mean and moody brute ploughing through space and punching people's heads in, the game's Japanese name sheds far more light on what's on offer here: Burai Fighter Color. This is in fact a colourised version of the Game Boy game Burai Fighter Deluxe (which itself was a port of the NES game Burai Fighter), but with a new name for some reason. Both games look the same (colour aside) but the Game Boy Color version removes some of the slowdown, meaning it's a slightly smoother experience, especially when things get more hectic. One thing the GBC version also removes, however, is the two-player Versus mode from the Game Boy game, making this a strictly solo affair. ■

FACT

An arcade version of Burai Fighter was developed in 1983, but was never released and (at the time of writing) has never surfaced online, despite its composer insisting it was real.

SPACE STATION SILICON VALLEY

Year	1999
Publisher	Take Two Interactive
Developer	Tarantula Studios

THIS REMARKABLE PORT of the Nintendo 64 game of the same name manages to convert a 3D adventure game to a 2D platformer while still retaining almost every element of the source material. As in the original version, the game tells the story of a spaceship that crashes on a space station that hosts robotic animals. With astronaut Dan Danger stuck in the ship, he sends out his robot Evo – who's now just a little microchip – to perform tasks. Evo can attack the robo-animals then jump into their stunned bodies, taking control of them: this lets you use their unique abilities to carry out each mission. Despite the complete change in style, the game sticks remarkably close to the N64 game's mission list and level design. ■

FACT

One idea scrapped for the original N64 game was some levels having macro and micro scales, meaning you could control an elephant one minute then zoom in and control a flea.

SPAWN

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Konami Konami

BASED ON THE comic series of the same name created by Todd McFarlane, Spawn has you playing as the titular hero, the reincarnated version of special agent Al Simmons brought back to life by a crooked pact with a demon and now doomed to spend his unlife as a minion of Hell: that is, unless he can find a way out of the deal. This Game Boy Color action platformer follows Spawn through seven chapters, taking in a pretty wide range of locations: the alley where Spawn is… well, spawned, a series of driving stages, the city streets, a church and even Heaven and Hell. Along the way there's plenty of fighting to be found, as well as an unusually large amount of digitised speech. ■

FACT

The first stage has a bunch of graffiti saying 'Korn' on the walls. Korn provided one of the main songs for the soundtrack of the *Spawn* movie in 1997.

SPEEDY GONZALES: AZTEC ADVENTURE

Year 1999
Publisher Sunsoft
Developer Sunsoft

DON'T ASSUME THIS is a colourised version of Speedy Gonzales on the Game Boy: this is a completely different game starring everyone's favourite Mexican mouse. When the game starts, this is a title he's earned by default, because all the other mice in Mexico have vanished. They've all been kidnapped by Sylvester the cat, so it's up to Speedy to rescue them quickly (because, frankly, there's no other way he can do things). The game is a platformer made up of six stages, taking in the Mexican city streets, jaguar country, wind country, fire country, water country and a temple. Along the way Speedy can arm himself with weapons like boomerangs, cheese balls and a hammer. Which presumably don't all hurt as much as each other. ■

FACT

The first cartoon which had Speedy in the title role, simply named *Speedy Gonzales*, won the Oscar for Best Animated Short in 1956.

SPIDER-MAN

Year	2000
Publisher	Activision
Developer	Vicarious Visions

DESIGNED TO RELEASE alongside the Neversoftdeveloped PlayStation game of the same name, Spider- Man is an all-new action platformer, but one that's less linear than most other handheld move tie-ins of its nature. Bad guys are all over New York so Spidey has to explore the likes of the city streets (starting from the *Daily Bugle* rooftops), the sewers, the docks and Dr Octopus's lab, taking on enemies and boss fights including Venom, The Lizard, Hoboblin, Doc Ock himself and Carnage. Rather than simply going from left to right, you have to explore each area fully to progress through the game. As Spidey fights enemies he gains experience points, not only building his stats but also giving him new abilities including an uppercut and a swing kick. ■

FACT

One of the reasons Spider-Man (and other Marvel comics) regularly reboot the plot and recap stories is because, as cocreator Stan Lee once said, 'every comic is somebody's first'.

SPIDER-MAN 2: THE SINISTER SIX

Year 2001
Publisher Activision
Developer Torus Games

FOLLOWING THE RELEASE of the first Spider-Man game, three different sequels were made for the PlayStation, Game Boy Color and Game Boy Advance. In this one, Spider- Man's Aunt May has been kidnapped by the Sinister Six, so our hero has to fight his way through all of them – that's Sandman, Vulture, Mysterio, Scorpion, Kraven and leader Doctor Octopus – to rescue her. While slightly more linear in structure (and dropping the experience points system), each of the game's six levels still require you to search each stage for a certain object or door unlock before you can progress. Each level is set in a different New York location, including the likes of the Coney Island Carnival, Madison Square Garden and Central Park. ■

FACT

The game was released three months before the September 11 attacks, but despite featuring a stage set at the World Trade Center it wasn't taken off the shelves.

SPIROU: THE ROBOT INVASION

Year 2000
Publisher Ubisoft
Developer Planet Interactive

RATHER THAN COLOURISING the Spirou game released for the Game Boy, this is an entirely new game with a fun gimmick. When Spirou's best friend and fellow journalist Fantasio brings home an unusual device, he quickly realises it's actually an evil robot, which breaks out of his house and summons a huge army of robots to rampage through the city. Deciding that this may not be an ideal situation, Spirou grabs a big club and sets out to bash the robots into scrap metal. Although it's typical Ubisoft platforming fare with the impressive animation expected from the publisher, the game's main gimmick is similar to that of Sega's 16-bit platformer Comix Zone, in that it takes place inside a comic book with Spirou travelling between panels. ■

FACT

A live-action movie based on Spirou and Fantasio was released in 2018, but critics weren't too keen on it, with French magazine Télérama calling it 'really too soft'.

SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS: LEGEND OF THE LOST SPATULA

Year 2001
Publisher THQ
Developer Vicarious Visions

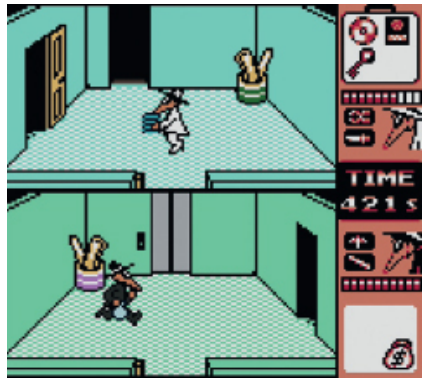
EVERY SERIES STARTS somewhere, and this was the first ever video game based on SpongeBob SquarePants (not counting cameos in stuff like racing games). After Mr Krabs tells SpongeBob the story of the legendary Master Fry Cook and his stolen golden spatula, our absorbent hero sets off on an adventure to retrieve said shiny utensil from the ghostly clutches of the Flying Dutchman. There are 11 locations in the game, with players initially exploring Bikini Bottom (and talking to the residents there), before venturing out to such areas as Downtown, Sandy's Park, the Goo Lagoon, the Undersea Desert and the Dutchman's Underworld. Items include a bubble wand (for shooting bubbles at enemies), a spatula (to throw burgers at them) and a jellyfish net. ■

FACT

More than 15 SpongeBob games feature a golden spatula in some way or another, though not usually as the central plot device.

SPY VS SPY

Year 1999
Publisher Vatical Entertainment /
Developer Kemco Kemco



WHILE THE GAME Boy version of Spy vs Spy sees the game's two protagonists on a desert island similar to the computer game sequel Spy vs Spy II: The Island Caper, this Game Boy Color port is more like the original Spy vs Spy game from 1984 (which was also ported to the NES). The general idea is the same: playing as either the white spy or black spy from *Mad* Magazine's classic comic strip, you have to collect a briefcase and gather the four other key items on the stage before heading to the exit. Items are hidden in desks and players can booby trap desks and doors to make their opponent drop their items: unless they have a tool to protect them. ■

FACT

Spy vs Spy was based on the Cold War, but the spies' allegiances were only revealed once, in a 1968 comic which said Black Spy belonged to 'the East' and White Spy to 'the West'.

STAR WARS EPISODE I: OBI-WAN'S ADVENTURES

Year Publisher Developer 2000 THQ HotGen

AS THE NAME suggests, this GBC exclusive follows the plot of the first *Star Wars* prequel by focusing solely on the parts involving Ewan McGregor's Obi- Wan Kenobi character. Starting off in the Trade Federation ship from the start of the movie, you find yourself travelling to Naboo, meeting the Gungans, heading to Coruscant, passing through the catacombs and streets of Theed, then fighting Darth Maul in the final battle. The game is mainly played from an isometric viewpoint and lets you switch between lightsaber, blaster and Force powers, but there's also a vehicle stage where you pilot a Gungan bongo submarine. Given that Obi-Wan is the star here, there's no podracing to be found: you'll need the other game for that. ■

FACT

The game was supposed to accompany Episode I: Obi-Wan, which was planned for PC. This was delayed, however, and eventually released in December 2001 as Xbox exclusive Star Wars: Obi- Wan.

STAR WARS EPISODE I: RACER

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Nintendo Pax Softonica

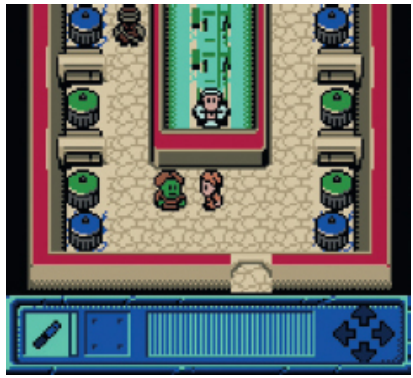
THE CONSOLE VERSIONS of the game based on the *Episode I* scene that definitely, honestly wasn't made with a video game spin-off in mind were polygonal kart racing affairs. The Game Boy Color version switched things to an overhead perspective, and restricted the races to one-on-one duels instead of full races with multiple podracers. While the console versions let you choose any racer, here you have to play as the definitely not annoying Anakin Skywalker as you take on 20 courses, each with their own podracing champion. Each time you win one of these duels your defeated opponent's podracer is added to your collection. There's also a two-player Link Cable mode, in case you fancy destroying the canon even further by adding a second Anakin. ■

FACT

If you beat all four races on one planet, you get to take on Anakin's rival Sebulba for a chance to win his podracer. If you lose a race after this, you lose Sebulba's pod and have to challenge him again.

STAR WARS: YODA STORIES

Year Publisher Developer 1999 THQ Torus Games



ORIGINALLY RELEASED AS a PC game in 1997 as part of its lo-fi Desktop Adventures series, Yoda Stories came to the Game Boy Color a couple of years later with more of a structure. Rather than the PC version's randomly generated missions, there are a firm 15 here. Playing as Luke Skywalker, you receive your orders from Yoda, which involve such tasks as recovering the impounded *Millennium Falcon*, destroying an Empire battle station and finding a lost amulet in a desert before Vader gets it. The unwieldy nature of a point-and-click game without a mouse, combined with stuttery performance, meant the game wasn't received well: *IGN* scored it 2/10 and *GameSpot* called it 'possibly the worst Star Wars game ever produced'. ■

FACT

The PC version was the second Desktop Adventures game, following Indiana Jones and His Desktop Adventures. LucasArts drew a line under the series after Yoda Stories.

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA: WARRIORS' DREAMS

Year 1999
Publisher Capcom / Virgin Interactive
Developer Crawfish

Interactive

GIVEN THAT THE Game Boy port of Street Fighter II was extremely limited, hopes weren't high that a Game Boy Color port of the far more technically advanced Street Fighter Alpha would be much better. As it turns out, it's probably about as accomplished as you expect from an 8-bit handheld with two buttons and is one of the more impressive 'impossible' ports on the handheld. Alpha is the prequel to the Street Fighter series and features a roster of 10 characters, only four of whom – Ryu, Ken, Chun-Li and Sagat – had been playable in the series before. the GBC version includes all 10 of them, as well as the three hidden characters Akuma, Dan and Bison, and retains all their special moves. ■

FACT

Even though the series is known as Street Fighter Zero in Japan, the Japanese release of the Game Boy Color version was still called Street Fighter Alpha.

STUART LITTLE: THE JOURNEY HOME

Year Publisher Developer 2001 Activision Tiertex

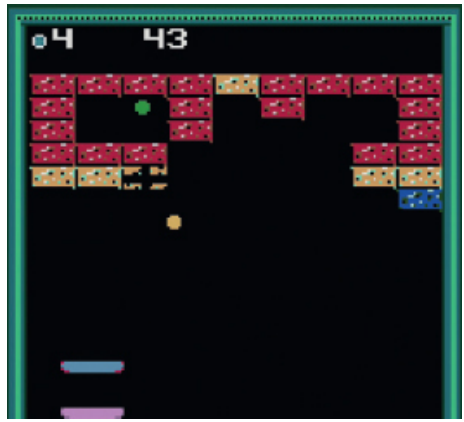
BASED ON THE 1999 movie in which Michael J Fox voices a mouse who's adopted by a human family, this basic, child-friendly game has you playing as Stuart Little across eight stages, split into platforming and racing gameplay. After exploring the house and collecting socks, Stuart then fights toy bandits in the Littles' toy cowboy town, rides a model boat, drives his little car at a mini golf course, floats through the sewers on his suitcase, drives his car around Central Park, explores the New York sewers then finally escapes from Central Park while being chased by alley cats. Despite the young target audience the controls are quite odd, with just a tap of the B button required to start running, and no way to defeat enemies. ■

FACT

The film's screenplay was written by M Night Shyamalan, best known for *The Sixth Sense* and other 'what a twist' movies. There's no twist here though, other than who wrote the script, I suppose.

SUPER BREAKOUT

Year 1998
Publisher Majesco
Developer Morning Star Multimedia



WHEN SUPER BREAKOUT got a standalone release on the Game Boy, it turned out to be a completely different port from the one in the two-in-one cartridge Arcade Classics 5. Anyone hoping that the Game Boy Color version of Super Breakout would be a third completely different game will be let down, because this is just a colourised version of the standalone Super Breakout on the Game Boy. Each of the game modes are still there, the option to change the beeps to explosions or musical notes each time you hit a brick is still there, and the ability to play a competitive two-player mode (taking turns with a single handheld) is still there. It's also got Game Boy support, so this is the one to get. ■

FACT

When Atari released the 5200, its successor to its popular Atari 2800 console, it included a copy of Super Breakout as a free bundled game.

SUPERCROSS FREESTYLE

Year 2000
Publisher Infogrames
Developer Velez & Dubail

THIS SOMEWHAT UNDERRATED European exclusive has three distinct game modes, making it almost feel like three games in one. Freestyle mode has you performing tricks by repeating button combinations within a short time window: the harder the trick, the more buttons. Supercross mode is played from behind your racer and has you taking on other opponents in a series of races around the world. Rounding things off is Arcade mode, which has a similar viewpoint to Supercross but takes things less seriously, with power-ups on the track which can make you invincible, freeze your opponents and the like. It doesn't get spoken about much these days (perhaps because it wasn't released in North America) but the response from critics in Europe was positive. ■

FACT

Although the first motocross race held inside a stadium was in 1948, the 'supercross' term was coined when a 1972 race in LA was billed as 'the Super Bowl of Motocross'.

SUPER MARIO BROS DELUXE

Year 1999
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Nintendo

IT'S HARD TO believe, but neither the Game Boy Color nor the Game Boy Advance got an entirely new Super Mario platformer: instead they got Wario Land games, Mario spin-offs or, in the case of the Super Mario Advance series and this game, enhanced ports of previous games. Super Mario Bros Deluxe takes the 1985 classic that kicked off the entire Super Mario series and makes it handheld for the first time. At first glance it isn't the strongest port: because the Game Boy Color has a lower resolution than the NES the action is zoomed in more, making it harder to see what's around Mario. This is compensated for with a wide range of extra features that convinced players to stick with it and re-learn how to play with this new cropped display. As well as the ability to play through the standard Super Mario Bros, a new Challenge mode has also been added which adds five red coins and a hidden Yoshi egg to each stage, and tasks players with not only finding them all, but also hitting a high score target. As you hit certain score milestones in the standard version you unlock even more modes: You vs Boo, for example, has you racing through each stage against a Boo (a literal

time trial ghost, if you will). Even better, score 300,000 points in the main game and you'll unlock a remake of Super Mario Bros: The Lost Levels, more than doubling the number of stages in the game.

FACT

Super Mario Deluxe actually wasn't given a retail release in Japan. Instead, it was available as part of Japan's Nintendo Power rewritable GBC cart service, which only lasted 17 months.

SURVIVAL KIDS

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Konami Konami

LONG BEFORE PRACTICALLY every open-world game had survival and crafting elements to it, Survival Kids did something similar. Playing as a boy called Ken or a girl called Mery (thankfully you can rename them), the game opens with you taking a boat trip that goes horribly wrong and finding yourself washed up on the shores of a desert island. Armed with only a knife, you have to start looking for food, drink and other items to help you survive. Some of these items are useless on their own but have to be combined: slap

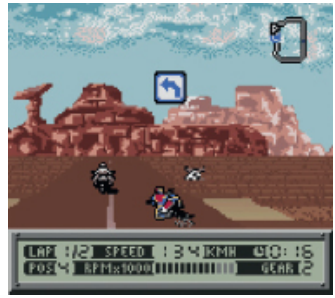
some tree sap onto a stick, for example, and it'll become a torch you can use to see in the dark. There are eight different endings, depending on certain conditions met. ■

FACT

The series was brought back on the DS and Wii, but while it kept the Survival Kids name in Japan this was changed to Lost in Blue in the west.

SUZUKI ALSTARE EXTREME RACING

Year 1999
Publisher Ubisoft
Developer Visual Impact



BEST KNOWN AMONG PC players as Redline Racer, this racing game was released on PC and Dreamcast but also got a port (albeit an understandably different one) on the Game Boy Color. As part of the Suzuki Alstare Racing team, you can choose to play as one of two real-life racers, Fabrizio Pirovano or Stephane Chambon. There's a Time Trial option but the main mode is Championship, where you take on progressively harder series of races to unlock two new courses set in Japan and the rather vague 'Europe'. The gameplay features a typical 'behind the bike' viewpoint, and each course is suitably hilly and winding. While the bike sprites are rather small, it does help the game zip by very quickly and smoothly. ■

FACT

Like many other GBC Ubisoft games, this supports the Ubi Key, in which another player with a Ubisoft title can beam an unlock to you. In this case, it unlocks an Extreme difficulty Championship.

SWING

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Software 2000 Software 2000

RELEASED ON THE PlayStation in North America as Marble Master but otherwise known as Swing, this brutally difficult puzzle game consists of four sets of scales at the bottom of the screen and a bunch of numbered balls (the numbers representing their weights) at the top. You have to match three or more balls of the same colour to make them disappear, but the twist is that you also have to try to keep the scales balanced. If dropping a ball suddenly makes one side heavier, a ball on the other side will be flung across the playing area, landing on another scale and messing up your plans. The concept isn't difficult to understand but the execution is far too imbalanced (pun always intended, sadly). ■

FACT

PC owners got a sequel called Swing Plus: Total Mind Control, but it was only released in Germany, so if you ever see a German with a giant brain that's why.

SWIV

Year Publisher Developer 2001 Sales Curve Interactive
The Conversion Company

ORIGINALLY RELEASED ON home computers in Europe in 1991 before eventually making the jump over to the Game Boy Color, SWIV is a vertically scrolling shoot ‘em up in which you get to choose between a helicopter and a jeep. Whereas in other versions of the game they each have their own pros and cons, in the Game Boy Color version the odds are very much stacked in favour of the helicopter, because the Jeep can’t fire in different directions like it can in other versions. This essentially makes it the same as the helicopter except it can bump into things, meaning unless you want to make life much harder for yourself for no real reason you should very much take Arnold Schwarzenegger’s advice and ‘get to da choppa’. ■

FACT

The game was inspired by Tecmo’s 1988 arcade game Silkworm, which used the same gimmick but as a side-scrolling shoot ‘em up.

TABALUGA

Year Published Developer 1999 Infogrames Neon Software

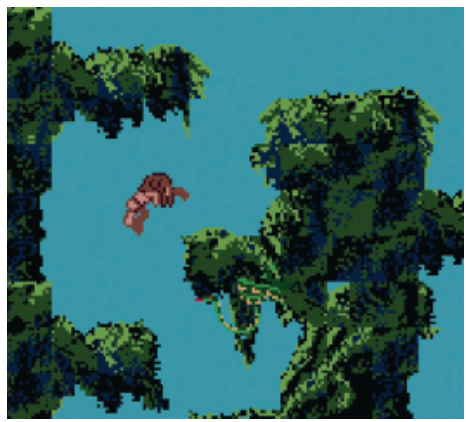
IF YOU'RE NOT familiar with it, *Tabaluga* is a German cartoon series about the last of the dragons, who lives in Greenland (albeit a magical version of Greenland where all the animals can talk). In this Game Boy Color adaptation, the animals start getting suspicious when snow starts falling in the forest – even though it's Greenland – so Tabaluga takes it upon himself to head out and figure out who's responsible (it turns out to be an evil snowman called Arktos). At first Tabaluga can't do much except walk around and talk to other characters but eventually he gains new abilities, such as flying and breathing fire. Naturally, this lets him access areas he couldn't previously get to. ■

FACT

A CGI animated movie based on *Tabaluga* was released in 2018. The following year it was dubbed to English and released in the US as *Ice Princess Luly*, and in the UK as *The Ice Princess*.

TARZAN

Year 1999
Publisher Activision
Developer Digital Eclipse



IF YOU WERE put off by the fact that the original Game Boy's Tarzan game had nothing to do with the Disney movie, you're in luck: this GBC game is totally different and this time it has Uncle Walt's DNA all the way through it (not literally). This platformer contains 12 stages and generally follows the course of the movie, with the player starting off as a young Tarzan. Over the course of the game you not only get to play as the older Tarzan too, there are also stages where you control love interest Jane and gorilla pal Terk. The game was praised for its impressive animation, its digitised drum noises and its use of fullmotion video for cutscenes.

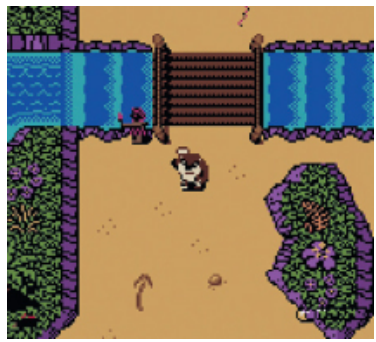
FACT

While recording lines for the movie Tarzan's voice actor couldn't perform an impressive Tarzan yell. Brian Blessed, who played villain Clayton, stepped in with his trademark booming voice.

TASMANIAN DEVIL: MUNCHING

MADNESS

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Sunsoft M4 Limited



WHEN BULL AND Axl Gator kidnap Taz's biggest fan Wendal T. Wolf and take him to Las Vegas to be an unwilling star, Taz gives chase. To get to Vegas he apparently needs lots of gold medallions, and to get those he needs to eat lots of food, for some reason. Regardless, Munching Madness is a refreshing defier of convention: rather than the typical side-scrolling platformer you'd associate with a cartoon tie-in, this is an overhead exploration game, where you wander around in search of food and other ways to earn medallions. As well as Taz's trademark spin attack, you can also spit food at enemies to harm them, as you travel across Tasmania, Australia, China, Greece, Switzerland, Amsterdam, the Amazon, Las Vegas and Transylvania. ■

FACT

The first time Taz meets Wendal in the *Taz- Mania* cartoon, he eats him then spits him out. Wendal then starts to idolise and follow Taz, much to his discomfort.

TAXI 2

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Ubisoft Visual Impact

TAXI 2, LIKE its predecessor, was a French action comedy film written by Luc Besson (*The Fifth Element*) in which a speedhungry taxi driver called Daniel is called upon to rescue a kidnapped Japanese defence minister who was visiting France on business. This GBC tie-in doesn't really follow the plot of the movie too much and instead has you playing as a different driver who takes missions from Daniel himself. There are ten of these missions in total, and while they're varied enough – beating a rally driver in a race, taking someone to the hospital as quickly as possible, outrunning a police chase – they all have the same basic feel. Your car feels a little less weighed down than in other racing games, and can sometimes go up on two wheels. ■

FACT

When it was released in France, there were 836 film prints distributed to cinemas. This was the most ever for a film in France up to that point, beating *Star Wars Episode I* (which had 797 prints).

TAXI 3

Year Publisher Developer 2002 Ubisoft Visual Impact

WHEN A FILM is as successful as *Taxi 2*, you'd better believe a third one is on the way. Sure enough, *Taxi 3* arrived in 2003, as did another Game Boy Color spin-off. I say 'another', but critics implied that 'the same' would have been a more appropriate term, due to the fact that the game is barely different from its predecessor in terms of look, feel and general premise (you're taking on missions from Daniel again, such as buying and delivering flowers and driving someone to the airport in time). As French website JeuxVideo put it in its review at the time: 'Have you played Taxi 2 on Game Boy Color? If so, then you have also played Taxi 3 on Game Boy Color.' ■

FACT

A US remake of the first *Taxi* was released in 2004, and starred Queen Latifah and Jimmy Fallon. The reception wasn't kind, and it currently sits on a Rotten Tomatoes score of 9%.

TECH DECK SKATEBOARDING

Year Publisher Developer 2001 Activision Handheld

LOOK, I COULD tell you that this skateboarding game is based on those little Tech Deck toy skateboards you can get, the ones that you use your fingers to skate on. I could tell you that the game revolves around visiting 10 skate parks and collecting all the Tech Decks located there, for a total of 50 decks to add to your collection. I could note that there's a Free Play mode where you can practise tricks, as well as an X-Treme difficulty mode where some of the most unique decks can be unlocked for use by everyone. But instead I have to reassure you that you're definitely playing as a finger riding a skateboard, and not anything else it may look slightly like. ■

FACT

Although Tech Deck is still considered the main fingerboard brand, the first example of one was shown by pro skater Lance Mountain during a 1985 skateboarding video called *Future Primitive*.

TEST DRIVE 2001

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Infogrames Xantera

A YEAR AFTER the release of Test Drive 6, this follow-up was released exclusively on the Game Boy Color, with no console versions this time. It's pretty much business as usual, with the same isometric viewpoint and the same three modes: Single Race, Tournament and Cop Chase. The number of cars has dropped from 12 to 11 but there are at least some new ones swapped in this time, most notably a trio of cars from Ford and one from Jaguar (neither manufacturer was represented in the GBC version of Test Drive 6). The tracks have been refreshed too, with new courses in China, Germany, Hollywood and New Orleans. For the most part, though, if you could only get one of the GBC Test Drive games, either would be fine. ■

FACT

Although the Test Drive series has continued over the following decades, this was (at the time of writing) the last Test Drive to be released on a Nintendo system.

TEST DRIVE 6

Year Published / Developer 1999 Infogrames / Cryo Interactive Xantera

ACCOMPANYING THE POLYGONAL versions of Test Drive 6 released on PC, PS1 and Dreamcast was this Game Boy Color version, which instead opts for an isometric viewpoint similar to RC Pro-Am and similar racers on the handheld. While the console versions featured more than 40 licensed cars, this is down to 12 in the GBC version, with sports and muscle cars from the likes of Dodge, Shelby, BMW, Audi and TVR. The main Tournament mode consists of seven cups, and playing through these unlocks tracks for the other modes, eventually bringing the total to 24 tracks in 12 locations. There's also a Cop Chase mode where you can turn your car into a police car and earn money by ramming into opponents with the siren on. ■

FACT

The Dodge Challenger, Dodge Charger Daytona, Panoz AIV Roadster and Plymouth Cyda 440 are all in the GBC version but not in the console or PC versions.

TEST DRIVE CYCLES

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Infogrames Xantera

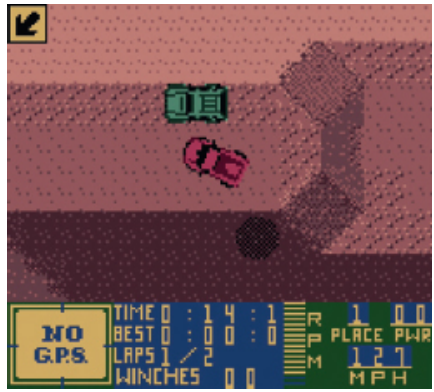
IN THE LATE ‘90s, Infogrames announced that it would be expanding the Test Drive series with a new game that focused solely on motorbikes, to be released on PlayStation, Dreamcast and PC. Ultimately, the game was cancelled, but the Game Boy Color port being developed alongside it did make it to release. Unlike the other Test Drive games on GBC, this one goes for a viewpoint behind the bike like most console racers. There are nine bikes to choose from in the main racing modes, including a bunch from Harley- Davidson and some from BMW, Bimota and Moto Guzzi. The Cop Chase mode from the other games also returns, along with a couple of exclusive bikes of its own, bringing the total to 11. ■

FACT

It’s said that the console versions were cancelled shortly after the lead programmer left the team. An early prototype of the Dreamcast version was leaked online in 2020.

TEST DRIVE OFF-ROAD 3

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Infogrames Xantera



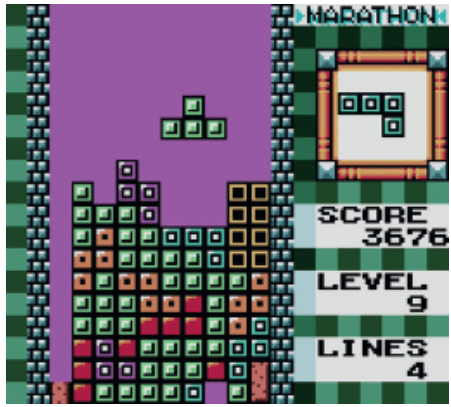
KNOWN IN EUROPE as 4x4 World Trophy, this is another handheld spin-off of a console Test Drive game. Whereas Test Drive 6 and 2001 went for an isometric viewpoint, however, Off-Road 3 is played directly overhead, which does make it a little tricky given how much verticality is in the game due to all its off-road bumps and jumps. There are 10 vehicles in the handheld version and naturally they're much chunkier than those in the other Test Drive games, with the likes of Jeep Cherokees, Hummers, Dodge Rams and Land Rover Defenders on offer. That said, the (slightly renamed) Patrol Chase mode still at least returns, meaning you can still dole out justice at a relatively low frame rate. ■

FACT

Many Test Drive games had to be renamed in Europe because the Test Drive licence was owned by Infogrames North America (formerly Accolade), but not EU publisher Infogrames Multimedia.

TETRIS DX

Year 1998
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Nintendo



WHEN YOU HAVE a handheld like the Game Boy, whose launch title (at least in the west) ended up being so iconic that it sold around 35 million units, it stands to reason that you'd try the same trick again for its successor. Hence Tetris WHEN YOU HAVE a handheld like the Game Boy, whose launch title (at least in the west) ended up being so iconic that it sold around 35 million units, it stands to reason that you'd try the same trick again for its successor. Hence Tetris DX, a launch title for the Game Boy Color that offers a modest refresh and makes no attempt to fix a formula that was clearly nowhere near broken. As well as the obvious addition of colour graphics, Tetris DX added profiles and a save feature to track high scores, as well as the ability to play a vs game against the CPU (instead of having to link with another player like before). Controversially, the game's music was also changed. ■

FACT

The DX version has a glitch where moving a piece against a wall while rapidly rotating it in the opposite direction would make it move upwards.

THREE LIONS

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Take Two Interactive
Tarantula Studios

ALTHOUGH THERE WAS an official video game for the 1998 FIFA World Cup in France, publisher Take-Two Interactive wanted to get in on the action and so licensed just the English national team, making a PS1 game in which they got star billing. Given that the game made no mention of the World Cup, it was able to be ported to the GBC a year later under the same name. Despite the obvious England love-in you don't have to play as them: there are 52 international teams to choose from around the world, all with real player names. In an unusual touch, you can set a 'playlist' of chants to play during the game, with 43 tunes from Guantanamera to Always Look on the Bright Side of Life. ■

FACT

Not every country cares about the England team, so the North American release was called Alexi Lalas International Soccer, the German one was Golden Goal and the French was Pro Foot.

THUNDERBIRDS

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Sales Curve Interactive

ONE OF THE main selling points of the iconic marionette sci-fi TV show *Thunderbirds* was that the team had a variety of vehicles that did different things. Naturally, then, the Thunderbirds game on BC makes the most of this over the course of its 22 missions, putting you in control of not only the different Thunderbirds crafts (rescuing hostages in Egypt in Thunderbird 1, bombing power generators with Thunderbird 2 and so on) but also other vehicles, such as Lady Penelope's FAB1 Rolls-Royce at one point. The game's plot starts off wonderfully vague: evil mastermind The Hood has 'been seen with a particularly evil smile on his face' so the assumption is made that he's working on something. Thankfully he is, or that'd be awkward. ■

FACT

The GBC version was supposed to launch alongside a PS2 game to celebrate the relaunch of the show on BBC 2 in 2000, but the PS2 version was cancelled.

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2000

Year 1999
Publisher THQ / EA Sports
Developer Xantera

DESPITE CONTINUING ITS PGA Tour series of golf games right through the Game Boy Color's life, EA only brought a single entry to Nintendo's handheld, though based on the critical reception that may have been too many. There are three official courses to play on here: TPC Summerlin in Las Vegas, TPC Sawgrass in Florida and TPC Scottsdale in Arizona. As well as Woods himself you can play as or against five other pros: Craig Stadler, Brad Faxon, Lee Janzen, Tom Kite and Davis Love III, and there are Skins, Tournament, Shootout or Stroke Play modes. However, criticism was levelled at the game for its confusing interface (which makes lining up shots difficult) and its use of enormous passwords instead of a battery save. ■

FACT

The 16th hole at TPC Scottsdale is the only fully enclosed hole in the PGA Tour. It's famous for its extremely raucous crowds, which obviously aren't in this game.

TINTIN IN TIBET

Year 2001 *Publisher* Infogrames *Developer* Bit Managers

BOTH OF THE Tintin games released for the Game Boy were given Game Boy Color ports too. Tintin in Tibet is almost exactly the same on both versions, with the obvious major difference being that the entire game has been colourised for the GBC. I say 'almost exactly the same' because there are a couple of very minor tweaks here and there to the game's visuals, most notably during a number of the cutscenes. While these consist of still images, some of the images have been tweaked, usually to give Tintin a different expression. This aside, the games are practically identical in nearly every way, so you'll be wanting this one for the addition of colour, not because Tintin looks less worried when he's looking out of a train window.

FACT

In the animated version of *Tintin in Tibet*, Tintin's cartoonist Herge appears in a cameo as a man holding a pad of paper.

TINTIN: PRISONERS OF THE SUN

Year 2001
Publisher Infogrames
Developer Bit Managers

WHILE THERE WERE a tiny handful of noticeable differences in the Game Boy Color version of Tintin in Tibet, there are even fewer to be found in the Prisoners of the Sun port. After going through both versions with a fine-toothed comb, the best I can come up with is that in one cutscene image there are little shocked sweat drops coming from a surprised Captain Haddock, and during the driving section there are now lines in the middle of the road. If you're an absolute stickler for appropriate markings on traffic infrastructure then you'll want to track this down but, again, for most people the upgrade to colour is the only real change of any interest. ■

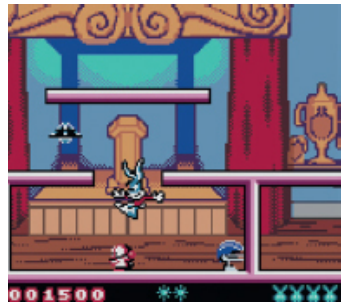
FACT

Tintin and the Temple of the Sun, the 1969 movie covering *The Seven Crystal Balls* and *Prisoners of the Son*, was the first Tintin movie (as opposed to the animated TV series).

TINY TOON ADVENTURES: BUSTER SAVES THE DAY

Year Publisher Developer

2001 Conspiracy Entertainment Warthog



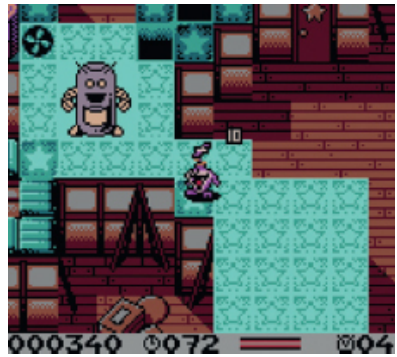
BUSTER SAVES THE Day is based on single-screen arcade games like Bubble Bobble and Mario Bros, albeit with a bit of scrolling because of the GBC's low screen resolution. Montana Max has kidnapped Babs, Plucky and Hamton, and has summoned henchmen to prevent Buster saving them. Over the course of 40 stages spread across 10 worlds, Buster has to defeat every henchman on each stage to clear it. He does this by hitting them with balls, then running up to them while stunned and smashing them with a hammer. Depending on which direction you hold the D-Pad you can throw an American football, kick a football or throw a baseball, each of which has different properties (baseballs explode when they hit a wall, for example). ■

FACT

The henchmen in the game come from Wackyland, which is full of strange characters. It wasn't actually created for Tiny Toon Adventures: it first appeared in 1938 cartoon *Porky in Wackyland*.

TINY TOON ADVENTURES: DIZZY'S CANDY QUEST

Year	2001
Publisher	Conspiracy Entertainment
Developer	Lost Boys Games



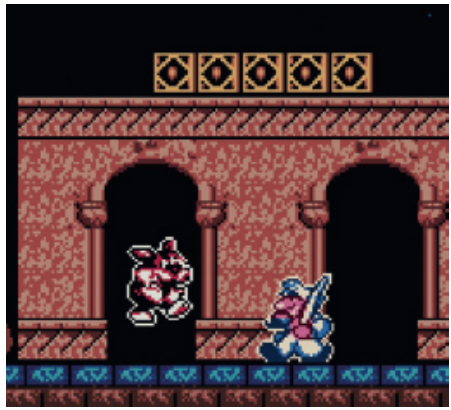
WHEN MONTANA MAX builds a robot called Stubby and programs it to steal all the candy in the world, the programming goes wrong and Stubby is befriended by Dizzy Devil instead. It's now up to Dizzy and Stubby to work together and get all the candy, while also avoiding clones of Hamton, Sweetie Bird, Gogo Dodo and others who have been created to stop them. Dizzy's Candy Quest is a sort of puzzle adventure played from an overhead perspective, consisting of 25 stages. In each, Stubby shows Dizzy where each piece of candy is, one at a time, and you collect and retrieve them until the stage is cleared. Dizzy's spin attack can also stun the attacking clones. ■

FACT

This was the first release by Lost Boys Games, which in 2003 was renamed Guerrilla Games. So yes, the studio behind the Horizon and Killzone games started on Tiny Toons.

TITUS THE FOX

Year	2000
Publisher	Titus Software
Developer	Aqua Pacific



FOR THE MOST part, the Game Boy Color version of Titus the Fox is identical to the Game Boy version, with Aqua Pacific – the team handling the colour port – not even bothering to remove the white outlines around Titus or his enemies which were originally there to make them stand out from the same-coloured backgrounds. However, this isn't actually a straight onefor- one port, and the differences are displayed front and centre. When you start the game you're thrown straight into stages called Extra Level 1 and Extra Level 2, which are both set in Marrakech. Only once these are cleared do you then start from Level 1, and then it's just the same as the Game Boy version from that point. ■

FACT

The box art for the Game Boy Color version looks nothing like the actual game, with Titus running through a bright forest with woodland creatures smiling at him.

TNN OUTDOORS FISHING CHAMP

Year 1999
Publisher ASC Games
Developer Starfish

DESCRIBED AS ‘THE biggest fishing experience ever for the Game Boy system’, this is a spin-off of the TNN Outdoors Bass Tournament console games. The game’s main Tournament mode consists of six stages – set at two saltwater locations and four freshwater ones – each of which sets a goal for you: catch three flat fish, catch more than 11 lbs of fish and so on. Once you reach the sixth stage and beat the final goal of catching more than 45 lbs in one day, the championship is yours. If that sort of pressure sort of goes against the idea of fishing to you, there’s also a Free Fishing mode where you can try to catch the game’s 32 different species at your own pace. ■

FACT

The Japanese version, Super Black Bass Pocket 3, had a proper ending but this was removed for the western release (along with the special Super Game Boy border that came with it).

TOCA TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

Year Publisher Developer 2001 THQ Spellbound Entertainment

A SPIN-OFF OF the main TOCA series which was three deep on the PlayStation by this point, the Game Boy Color version of TOCA takes a leaf out of Test Drive's book and ditches the typical polygonal 'behind the car' view for an isometric viewpoint. There are eight real-life touring cars to choose from, representing such manufacturers as Volvo, Honda, Ford and Audi (in my driving experience, the latter doesn't come with indicator lights). There are nine tracks located around the UK, from Donington and Brands Hatch to Scotland's sole representative, Knockhill in Fife. The game's speed means this isn't one you're going to master quickly: memorisation of the tracks and their sharper turns are the key to success here. ■

FACT

The game's manual actively encourages players to skid into the cones around each track and send them flying, saying they were added to the game for exactly that reason.

TOKI TORI

Year Publisher Developer

2001 Capcom Two Tribes Interactive

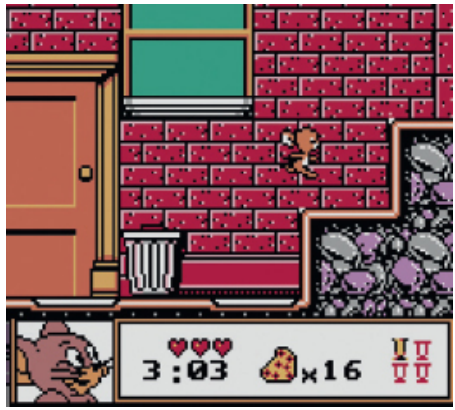
THIS PUZZLE PLATFORMER tells the story of Toki Tori, a young chick who is separated from his siblings when their eggs are all sucked out of their coop and sent flying towards a mysterious castle in the distance. Following an unnecessarily long and unskippable intro, Toki Tori has to travel through the game's four worlds – Forest Falls, Creepy Castle, Slime Caves and Bubble Barrage – and find all the eggs on each stage by using the tools available to him. Each tool only has a limited number of uses, and levels are designed in such a way that there's usually only one solution, meaning a bit of forward planning (and likely some trial and error) is needed to beat each stage. ■

FACT

Limited Run Games rereleased the GBC version of Toki Tori in 2022, allowing more people to get their hands on it at a relatively 'cheep' price (sorry).

TOM & JERRY

Year 1999
Publisher Majesco
Developer Morning Star Multimedia



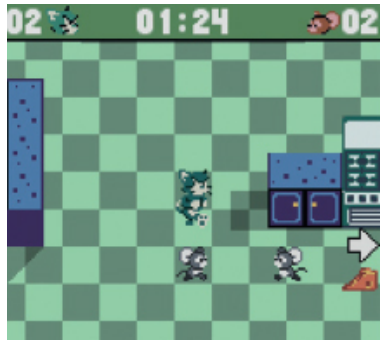
ALTHOUGH THIS IS technically the same game as the Tom & Jerry game published by Beam Software seven years earlier, there's at least been some tweaks here and there that go beyond simply adding colour. Some of the sprites have been completely redone, from the title screen image (Tom actually has whiskers now) to many of the wall and floor textures in each stage, making things look a little more detailed. Some of the music has also been replaced, though it's not a complete overhaul because some tracks remain untouched. Ultimately, because it isn't compatible with the original Game Boy players will have to choose accordingly based on their system, but given the choice this version edges it. ■

FACT

Majesco at least acknowledges that this is a re-release of an old game, slapping the words 'the hit classic!' on the top of the box art.

TOM & JERRY: MOUSE HUNT

Year	2000
Publisher	Conspiracy Entertainment
Developer	Conspiracy Entertainment



THIS RATHER MANIC game is a one-on-one affair in which Tom is trying to ruin Jerry's mouse party by kidnapping as many of his little mouse friends as he can. Mice randomly wander around each stage: Tom's aim is to grab them and throw them into his basket, while Jerry is also trying to grab them so he can chuck them into his mouse hole and keep them safe. There are also power-ups dotted around to mix things up a bit: if you collect the stinky cheese you can attract the mice and get them to move to a certain area, whereas if you collect the dog whistle you can summon Spike, who'll chase your opponent around the room while you focus on the mice. ■

FACT

The game's bonus stages include a Game & Watch parody (complete with single-frame animations) in which Tom has to catch falling plates being dropped by Jerry.

TOM & JERRY IN MOUSE ATTACKS!

Year 2000
Publisher NewKidCo / Ubisoft
Developer Warthog

TOM HAS KIDNAPPED five of Jerry's friends – Muscles, Tuffy, Uncle Pecos, Quacker the duckling and Tyke the bulldog – so it goes without saying that it's all on Jerry to rescue them all. Taking place over five stages, Mouse Attacks! revolves around the collection of golden items. Each stage has doors which require a certain number of golden items to open: once you're inside you take on a mini-game – be that waterskiing, catching eggs or, so help me, another tile-sliding puzzle – and succeeding earns Jerry a power-up which can be used to progress (rockets for blasting through parts of the ceiling, umbrellas for floating over long distances and the like). In a fun cartoon trope, each stage also contains a little devil and a little angel, who give advice. ■

FACT

The first Tom & Jerry cartoon, 1940's *Puss Gets the Boot*, was the first ever collaboration by William Hanna and Joseph Barbera, who would go on to form Hanna-Barbera together.

TOMB RAIDER

Year 2000
Publisher THQ
Developer Core Design

AS ONE OF the most popular video game franchises of the early polygonal era, Tomb Raider had four games under its belt by the time Core Design tried its hand at a handheld version. In an entirely new story, Lara Croft travels to Peru after a curator warns that dodgy characters are interested in the powerful Nightmare Stone, but when she gets to the temple where it's held there are already signs of a recent struggle and so the adventure begins. Despite the jump from polygonal 3D to sprite-based side scrolling 2D, Tomb Raider does a solid job of replicating Lara's movements from the main game, resulting in an adventure that feels like a cross between the main series and something like Prince of Persia. ■

FACT

Core Design told *IGN* that it made Lara's sprite bigger than in most other GBC platformers (48 pixels tall) and gave her 2000 frames of animation to make sure her movements came across well.

TOMB RAIDER: CURSE OF THE SWORD

Year 2001
Publisher Activision
Developer Core Design

WHEN LARA TRIES to stop the theft of a sword from a museum, she's cut in the process. Turns out whoever's blood touches the blade has to be used in a ritual to transfer the soul of evil magician Madame Paveau into their body, so Lara heads after the cult responsible, in an attempt to break the curse and stop Madame Paveau's resurrection. Curse of the Sword plays a lot like the previous GBC Tomb Raider, but this time Lara's adventure takes place less in the tombs and more in cities like New Orleans and New York. Both the Game Boy Color Tomb Raider games were critically wellreceived, and praised for capturing the Tomb Raider feel and presenting it via a different genre. ■

FACT

The game was released just weeks after the first movie starring Angelina Jolie. She didn't want to wear Lara's tiny shorts, but ultimately agreed to make fans happy, so don't say she doesn't suffer for her art.

TONIC TROUBLE

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Ubisoft RFX Interactive

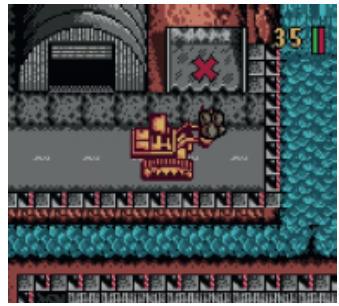
WHILE THE N64 version of Tonic Trouble is known for its development troubles which led to a delay of nearly two years, the Game Boy Color version was spared such infamy (though it was also spared a North American release, so swings and roundabouts). The plot is similar: space janitor Ed accidentally drops a can of mystery fluid, which falls from his spaceship and lands on Earth, mutating it. Ed has to dash down to Earth and try to recover the can while dealing with all the mutated monsters he's created. Whereas the N64 version was one of Ubisoft's first 3D platformers and therefore somewhat revolutionary, the GBC version is a far more straightforward example of the 2D platforming genre. ■

FACT

Tonic Trouble supports the Ubi Key. If a player with another compatible Ubisoft GBC game connects to your GBC, you'll get a bonus stage where you play as Super Ed and can get a 3-Up.

TONKA CONSTRUCTION SITE

Year 2002
Publisher TDK Mediactive
Developer Sunset Entertainment



THIS MISSION-BASED GAME has a similar concept to Matchbox Caterpillar Construction Zone, but this time is based on those gloriously chunky big Tonka trucks instead of Matchbox's small toy vehicles. The game lets you take control of seven different Tonka vehicles including bulldozers, cranes and dump trucks, and has you using their various functions in more than 50 missions spread across five parts of Tonka Town. Controlling a beast like a Tonka truck can be resource-intensive so you also have to monitor your vehicle's fuel and damage and collect powerups to top them up along the way. Each mission also has a timer so you can't mess around for too long before it's time to start concentrating and pick up a load of boulders. ■

FACT

Tonka started as Mound Metalcraft in 1946, before changing its name to Tonka Toys in 1955. The name Tonka comes from the Dakota Sioux word tanka, which means 'big'.

TONKA RACEWAY

Year 1999
Publisher Hasbro Interactive
Developer Morning Star Multimedia

IT'S ALL WELL and good using Tonka trucks for construction tasks, but what do you do when the construction site is closed and there are no more bricks to lift or debris to dump? You take the big sods round to a track and race with them, that's what. Tonka Raceway lets you choose between four Tonka vehicles – a dump truck, a 4x4 off-road vehicle, a bulldozer and a race car (I mean, I know which one I'd pick in a race) – and take part in one of three themed tournaments: Tropical Paradise, Scorching Desert or Winter Wonderland. As you win races you earn credits which can then be used to improve your truck's engine, tyres, turbo or shocks. ■

FACT

In 2002, Ford created a concept car called the Mighty F-350, which was a heavy duty yellow pickup truck created in collaboration with Tonka. Look it up, it's a beast.

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Activision Natsume

WHILE NUMEROUS OTHER Game Boy Color ports of console extreme sports games attempt to at least replicate the feel in a handheld form, the first GBC Tony Hawk title is completely different from its source material not only in appearance, but in concept too. Rather than freely roaming around a series of stages looking for tricks and combos, here there are two separate gameplay styles. The first is a halfpipe (similar to the one in California Games) in which you skate back and forth, pulling off tricks until time runs out. The other is a vertically scrolling race, viewed from an overhead perspective, in which you try to beat your opponent to the finish line. Critics complained that neither mode fit the Tony Hawk's Pro Skater mood. ■

FACT

Any time you pull off a trick in the race mode, the game freezes and a giant full-screen illustration appears, telling you what trick you performed. This happens every time.

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2

Year 2000
Publisher Activision
Developer Natsume

FOLLOWING THE CRITICAL indifference to its first GBC version of Tony Hawk, someone seemingly decided that the sequel might do better if it actually had a similar aim to its console equivalent. Gone are the halfpipe and racing stages, then, in favour of two other types of stage, both focused on getting high scores and performing other typical Tony Hawk goals such as collecting letters spelling S-K-A-T-E. There are seven stages based on venues from the console version of the game, and these are split into 2D sidescrolling levels (with jumps and grinds) and overhead levels where you can freely skate around. The latter was the closest players had gotten to a Tony Hawk's Pro Skater experience on the GBC to that point. ■

FACT

The GBC version contains all 13 professional skaters featured in the console versions, but doesn't have its hidden characters, such as Private Carrera or Spider-Man.

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

Year 2001
Publisher Activision
Developer HotGen

ATTEMPTING TO PROVE that the third time's the charm, the GBC version of Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 brings together both the viewpoints from the second game for one hybrid style in which you move along a series of 2D planes which have jumps which let you move up or down a plane, essentially giving you a 3D environment. The user interface resembles the console versions more, making grinds and manuals easier to understand. That said, it's still extremely tricky to pull off a decent combo, meaning it's still not quite as intuitive as the console series it takes inspiration from. There are nine stages in this one, including the Foundry, a skate camp in Canada, an airport, Rio and Los Angeles. ■

FACT

Bob Burnquist appeared in the first two games but wasn't in this one because he instead signed up to appear in PS2 game ESPN X Games Skateboarding. He returned for THPS4.

TOOBIN'

Year 2000 *Publisher* Midway *Developer* Digital Eclipse

PROUDLY DECLARING ITSELF the 'first handheld version' of Toobin, this vertically scrolling action game is based on Atari and Midway's 1988 arcade title. Sitting in the middle of a river on a giant rubber ring (or inner tube, if you prefer, hence Toobin'), you have to paddle your way to the bottom of a series of stages without bumping into too many dangerous hazards and losing all your lives. The arcade version of Toobin' featured intuitive controls with separate paddle buttons for each hand: you'd hit one to paddle to the side or hit both to go downwards. the GBC version swaps this for a single paddle button and the ability to rotate the ring, which actually makes it harder to quickly change direction. ■

FACT

Toobin' was originally supposed to be a kayaking game, and the cabinet would have a big rowing controller, but designer Dennis Harper noticed some people didn't know how to row and weren't having fun.

TOONSYLVANIA

✓ ✓ ✗

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Ubisoft RFX Interactive

TOONSYLVANIA WAS THE first ever animated series produced by DreamWorks and was executive produced by Steven Spielberg. The show contained a series of different segments, but this game is based on the Frankenstein sections that usually opened each episode. Playing as Igor, you have to explore Vic Frankenstein's castle and find the 15 scattered body parts of Phil the Monster. Each world also has other items which have to be collected to build new inventions, giving Igor new abilities. Collect nine phials, for example, and you can build a diving suit which lets Igor go underwater. Like the countless other Ubisoft games of this period, it uses the Ubi Key feature, which lets another Ubisoft game-owning chum beam you a bonus stage with extra lives in it. ■

FACT

Like Buzz Lightyear of Star Command, this is another GBC game based on a cartoon that starred Wayne Knight, aka Newman from *Seinfeld* and Dennis Nedry in *Jurassic Park*.

TOOTUFF

Year 2001
Publisher Infogrames
Developer Planet Interactive

ON THE OFF-CHANCE that you don't think there are enough Game Boy games based on French comics, here's another one to reassure you. *Tootuff* (or *Titeuf* in its native Switzerland) is a comic series about a 10-year-old lad, and since its original launch in 1992 has grown to become the highest-grossing French comic at the time of writing. This Game Boy Color adaptation is a party game, in which players take control of Tootuff or one of his three friends and run around a Mario Party style board game set on the playground. There are 21 mini-games to play in this mode, with such lovely titles as Mission Im-Pee-Able and Poo Wars. If you're curious, the latter is a Bomberman clone where you place exploding poo. ■

FACT

If you're a British reader of a certain age and wondering why Tootuff is familiar, he had a short run in the Dandy comic in 2005, while the cartoon aired on GMTV's Toonattik.

TOP GEAR POCKET

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Kemco Vision Works

TOP GEAR POCKET (known as Top Gear Rally in Europe) is a Game Boy Color spin-off of the Top Gear series of racing games, not to be confused with the BBC show of the same name. You start with two cars but by playing through the Championship mode and winning races you can end up with a full helping of 15: these all have fictional names but are based on real cars, so the Type- VW is based on a Volkswagen Beetle, the Type-MN is a Mini Cooper and the Type-VP is a Dodge Viper. Similarly, you start off with only three tracks but eventually end up with eight, from a simple grassland environment to an icy polar track. ■

FACT

Of all the Game Boy Color games released in North America to have a rumble feature built into the cartridge, Top Gear Pocket was the first.

TOP GEAR POCKET 2

Year	2000
Publisher	Vatical Entertainment /
Developer	Kemco Vision Works

THE SECOND TOP Gear Pocket is similar to its predecessor but offers a number of features to make it the best of the two. This time you start with four cars and can eventually end up with 17, while the track count starts at six and ends up reaching 36 (including mirror tracks). The password feature has also been removed in favour of a battery back-up save, meaning you can finally ditch your notepad while playing. Gameplay is similar, but since the racing was critically acclaimed the first time around that's not necessarily a bad thing. If you're curious to play it, you might want to track down the Japanese version of the game instead, because it included rumble while the western versions didn't. ■

FACT

Presumably because of pressure from the BBC, the European version completely ditched the Top Gear name this time, with the game simply called TG Rally 2.

TOP GUN: FIRESTORM

Year Publisher Developer 2001 Titus Software Fluid Studios

ALL THE TOP Gun games released on Nintendo systems up to this point had been first-person affairs with the player taking on other planes in a load of dogfighting malarkey. For Top Gun: Firestorm, Fluid Studios instead went for an isometric viewpoint, similar to Desert Strike and its sequels. Whereas EA's series was a slow-paced affair mostly involving a helicopter, though, here you're flying your F-14 Tomcat at high speed through 12 missions, taking on 10 different ground enemies and nine different airborne ones. You do still have to land your plane at the end of the mission – something that may make owners of the NES Top Gun game a tad sweaty – but it's much easier here. ■

FACT

Of all the actors who flew in fighter jets during the shooting of the movie, only Anthony Edwards (who played Goose) didn't vomit.

TOWERS: LORD BANIFF'S DECEIT

Year 2000
Publisher Vatical Entertainment /
Developer Telegames JV Games

TOWERS WAS ORIGINALLY released for the Atari ST home computer in 1993, before getting a PC port in 1994 and this Game Boy Color version years later. Set in the enchanted world of Lamini, the game is a first-person dungeon crawler in which you play as one of four characters who've been asked to go to Lord Baniff's tower to find him. As you enter the tower the entrance collapses, trapping you inside and leaving you to explore its monsterriddled corridors. Fights take place in real-time and you fight enemies either with the weapons you find or with spells, which are performed (once learned) by choosing a sequence of syllables. Critics said the game felt awkward to play given that it was initially designed for mouse control. ■

FACT

A sequel called Towers II: Plight of the Stargazer was released in 1995, meaning by the time the GBC port of Towers was released its successor was already half a decade old.

TOY STORY 2

Year Publisher Developer 1999 THQ / Activision Tiertex

THIS ISN'T TO be confused with the console game Toy Story 2: Buzz Lightyear to the Rescue. Even though you do still play as Buzz in this one, it's very different. Over the course of 11 stages, you have to find and rescue Woody, who's been kidnapped by the owner of Al's Toy Barn. Starting off in Andy's room, you have to get through a yard sale, cross the road, go through the toy shop, get to Al's apartment, find the suitcase containing Woody at the airport, sprint along the runway, free Woody from the plane's cargo hold then run back to Andy's room before Andy gets home. Everything Buzz does drains his battery, so he needs to keep picking up new ones along the way. ■

FACT

The manual says Buzz can rescue Woody using 'his training as a Space Ranger from the Universe Protection Unit', but by the second movie he knows he's a toy, not a real Space Ranger.

TOY STORY RACER

Year 2001 *Publisher* Activision *Developer* Tiertex

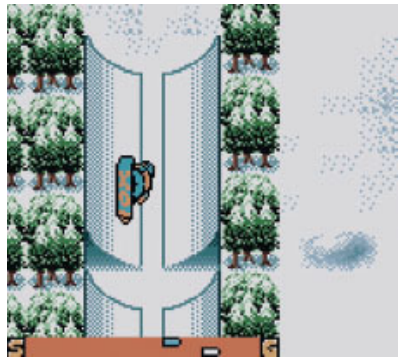
ACCOMPANYING A PLAYSTATION game with the same name, Toy Story Racer is a kart racing game set in the world of the first Toy Story movie. You initially get to choose between Woody, Buzz Lightyear, Bo Peep and Mr Potato Head, and by playing through the game you can also unlock an army man and one of the little green aliens. The main Tournament mode features tracks in Andy's house, Pizza Planet and the streets of Andy's neighbourhood, with one last, very long race covering both Sid and Andy's houses. The game's main gimmick is its art style: rather than playing it safe like other GBC racers and going for either an isometric view or an Out Run clone, the game uses prerendered CGI 'movies' for its tracks. ■

FACT

Toy Story Racer was the third Tiertex racing game on GBC to use the fake 3D background effect, following F1 Championship Season 2000 and Championship Motocross 2001.

TRICK BOARDER

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Natsume Natsume



JUST A FEW months after Natsume finished development on the GBC version of Tony Hawk's Pro Skater, its next game was released with familiar looking gameplay. Trick Boarder is basically the vertically scrolling racing section from the GBC Tony Hawk, but with the skateboards replaced by snowboards. You choose from eight fictional characters, each with their own generic name (Mark Hunter, Scott Mackay, Karen Young etc) and their own acceleration, spin and jump stats. You then choose whether to take on the main Grand Prix mode, practice with a Time Trial race or face off against another player. Gameplay is identical to the Tony Hawk races, right down to the annoying way it pauses after a trick to show some artwork of that trick. ■

FACT

One of the racers is called Kate Perry. Just eight years later, US singer Katy Perry found fame with her album 'One of the Boys'. Coincidence? Yes.

TRIPLE PLAY 2001

Year Publisher Developer 2000 THQ Handheld Games

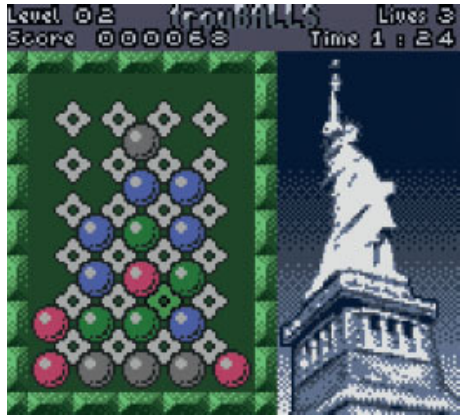
THE ONLY GAME in EA's Triple Play series of baseball games to be released on a handheld system, Triple Play 2001 was criticised for having a bare-bones set of features compared to the accompanying PS1 and PC versions. The game does boast the MLB and MLBPA licences, meaning all the real team and player names, but there are only three types of throw for pitchers: fastballs, slow balls and curveballs. Although the stadiums are named after the real-life ones they all look similar, and the legendary players in the PS1 version aren't in this one. The biggest criticism, however, was levelled at the fact that there are only Exhibition and Home Run Derby modes, with no Season mode at all. ■

FACT

After Triple Play 2002, EA renamed the series MVP Baseball. When Take- Two Interactive signed an exclusivity deal with MLB, EA made a couple of college baseball games then killed the series.

TROUBALLS

Year Publisher Developer 2001 Capcom Paragon 5



TROUBALLS IS ONE of those puzzle games that is easy enough to understand but can have your brain throbbing within minutes. The game screen consists of a bunch of coloured balls, all joined together by sets of gears in the background. By turning the gears you can rotate the balls, changing their position on the screen. If you can arrange balls of the same colour into either a 2x2 or 2x3 group, they'll all disappear, and the aim is to clear all the balls from the screen. Naturally, it's not quite as easy as it sounds – nowhere near it – because while rotating the gears you might accidentally make a group you didn't mean to, leaving a couple of balls spare and forcing a restart. ■

FACT

The game's blurb on the back of the box is headlined 'Trouble with Trouballs'. This is a reference to the Star Trek episode *The Trouble with Tribbles*, which is about little furry aliens.

TUROK: RAGE WARS

Year 2000
Publisher Acclaim
Developer Bit Managers

THE N64 VERSION of Turok: Rage Wars focused mainly on multiplayer deathmatches (similar to Unreal Tournament or Quake III Arena), so obviously this GBC game is completely different. An evil legion called the Amaranthine Accordance wants to set up bases on four planets to prepare to invade Earth, so Turok has to transport himself to each of these planets and stop the Accordance's plans. The game is a run and gun style game in which Turok can move in eight directions. He's initially armed with a knife and a bow but can eventually gather new weapons, upgrade his existing ones and even combine some. By combining your bow with a shotgun, for example, you can get a crossbow which doesn't have to be pulled back first, allowing for faster shots. ■

FACT

The Turok from the first game was called Tal'Set, and the Turok from the second was called Joshua Fireseed. Joshua is also the hero in Rage Wars, shortly before he gives up the role in Turok 3.

TUROK 2: SEEDS OF EVIL

Year Publisher Developer 1998 Acclaim Bit Managers

BEFORE THE GBC got Turok: Rage Wars, it got its own sidescrolling version of Turok 2. In this one, the Amaranthine Accordance is planning to create a dimensional gate between the Lost World and Earth, so it can send a bunch of Dinosoids to take over. It's up to Turok to head into the portal and take on their Dinosoids on their home soil before they can start coming to Earth in their droves. Much like the Turok game on the original Game Boy, Seeds of Evil is a typical side-scrolling action game taking place over eight stages, as you fight a variety of Dinosoids and actual dinos such as raptors, elasmosaurus and triceratops. The game was generally well-received by critics. ■

FACT

In case you're curious, Dinosoids are genetically modified creatures which look mostly like dinosaurs but have human traits like more intelligence or the ability to hold weapons.

TUROK 3: SHADOW OF OBLIVION

Year 2000
Publisher Acclaim
Developer Bit Managers

LIKE THE OTHER Game Boy Color Turok games before it, Shadow of Oblivion shares its name with a Nintendo 64 game but has a different storyline. As the Amaranthine Accordance starts to lose power, it uses a dimensional gate to travel to Earth and stock up on human weapons to take out its rival faction, the Solidarity Order. The Order asks Turok to step in and finish off the Accordance once and for all. Like the GBC version of Rage Wars, the game is a run and gun in which Turok can move around the screen in all directions as he kills any Dinosoids who get in his way. Critics generally believed that of the four Turok Game Boy games, this was the best. ■

FACT

The handheld Turok tradition continued when Turok: Evolution was released on PS2 and Xbox in 2002, and was accompanied by a 2D action platformer on GBA.

TWEENIES: DOODLES' BONES

Year 2001
Publisher BBC Multimedia
Developer Tiertex

THROUGHOUT THE EARLY 2000s, the BBC was home to the Tweenies, a bunch of slightly terrifying adult-sized puppet preschoolers with a bloody enormous dog called Doodles (i.e. another adult in a suit). Said dog has lost his bones in this Game Boy Color tie-in, but thankfully Max has made a map showing where they are. The problem is, the map has been torn up into pieces, so you have to explore the Tweenies' house and garden, taking on basic tasks to find the pieces of the map. Some of these tasks are short platform stages where you collect flowers or skittles, while others are minigames like catching clay in pots, matching shapes that appear on a TV or repeating patterns of sounds. ■

FACT

In the show's final season, on its 322nd episode, a second adultsized dog called Izzles was introduced, and was very much the Scrappy Doo of the show.

TWEETY'S HIGH-FLYING ADVENTURE

Year 2000 *Publisher* Kemco *Developer* Kemco

IN 2002, LOONEY Tunes character Tweety starred in his own straight-tovideo movie in which he was tasked with travelling around the world in 80 days, collecting the pawprints of 80 cats along the way. This GBC tie-in follows a similar plot, with stages set in Paris, Venice, Egypt, Africa, Yokohama, Australia, San Francisco, Las Vegas and London. Each stage has a number of cats roaming around: you need to stun every cat and collect their pawprint before you can go to customs and move to the next city. Naturally, Tweety isn't the strongest character, but he can collect items to help him stun the cats, including banana peels, plunger guns or the good old tactic of thwacking them on the head with a newspaper. ■

FACT

When you reach the end of the game, you only have 79 pawprints. This leads to the final boss fight, where you have to collect the final pawprint from none other than Sylvester.

TYCO R/C RACIN' RATZ

Year 2000
Publisher Mattel Interactive
Developer KnowWonder

THROUGHOUT THE LATE ‘80s and the ‘90s, Tyco Toys enjoyed success with its line of radio controlled cars. This GBC game, based on those cars, has you choosing between two troublemaker kids called Chris and Betty. After a Tyco car smashes a vase (hardly a good ad), the pair are sent to their room. Not to be put off, they decide to use their cars to drive around the house, stealing items and bringing them back. The game is basically a platformer in which the ‘hero’ is a car, meaning you have to find ways to bounce up onto tables and such to collect the items. It’s just weird having to steal things like car keys, the living room TV remote and their granny’s dentures. ■

FACT

The game ends with their parents banging on their door, unable to get in because of all their loot, while they laugh. Truly they are the worst Game Boy heroes, and that includes GTA.

ULTIMATE FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIP

Year 2000
Publisher Crave Entertainment
Developer Fluid Studios

IN THE EARLY days of the UFC, before it became the global powerhouse it is today, it got a trio of video games on the Dreamcast, PS1 and GBC, each handled by separate developers. the GBC version features eight of the most popular fighters at the time: Tito Ortiz, Pedro Rizzo, Frank Shamrock, Guy Mezger, Kevin Randleman, Evan Tanner, Chuck Liddell and Eugene Jackson. Given the lack of buttons the combat isn't exactly nuanced and focuses a lot more on striking than submissions: the B and A buttons perform various punches and kicks, while pressing both initiates a grapple, which is usually just an excuse for more punches. It's fun enough as a fighting game, if not necessarily as an 'ultimate' fighting game. ■

FACT

The GBC version was released 10 days after UFC 28 in Atlantic City where, in bad timing, the game's only representative Kevin Randleman lost his heavyweight belt to Randy Couture.

ULTIMATE PAINTBALL

Year 2000
Publisher Majesco
Developer Morning Star Multimedia

WHY SETTLE FOR conventional, acceptable paintball when you can go all-out and opt for Ultimate Paintball? After placing your flags, you have to move your icon around a forest map in search of your opponents' flag. Every now and then you'll engage in a battle: this switches the action to a first-person perspective and gives you a sort of lightgun game where you have to shoot (or throw paint grenades at) any opponents you see hiding in the trees or bushes. Take them all out and you'll get an arrow that points you towards their flag. As you clear stages you earn credits which can be used to upgrade your gun (to stop it jamming so frequently) and upgrade your armour (so you can take more hits). ■

FACT

A GBA version of Ultimate Paintball was in development at Majecso's in-house studio Pipe Dream Interactive, but it wasn't to be.

ULTIMATE SURFING

Year 2001
Publisher Natsume
Developer Act Japan

THERE HAVEN'T BEEN many surfing games over the years, and there have been even fewer that have been great. Critical consensus was that Ultimate Surfing fell a little short of being one of them. The main Grand Prix mode lets you choose between six surfers, each with their own stats for speed, acceleration, turning and stamina. You then compete in a series of six surfing events in Hawaii, California, Australia, Japan, Brazil and the South Pole, trying to score as many points as possible. These events are also occasionally broken up with a fun mini-game in which you have to knock over bottles with a Frisbee. Sorry, I mean a flying disc. There's also a two-player mode if you want to compete against a friend. ■

FACT

Surfing is believed to have originated in Hawaii. One of the early references to it as a sport was in 1849, where Herman Melville referred to a 'rare sport at Ohonoo' (a fictional place in Polynesia).

UNO

Year 1999
Publisher Mattel Interactive
Developer HotGen

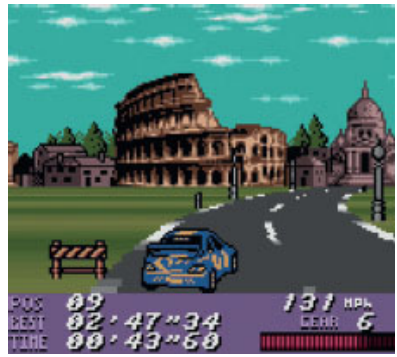
NOTHING BRINGS THE family clos… um, nothing makes the family argue like a game of Uno, and this Game Boy Color version lets them argue digitally. As in the physical card game, the aim is to get rid of all the cards in your hand before your opponent(s). The game can be played by up to four players, but only two of these can be humans because it only supports Link Cable player for 1–2 players. There's also a Challenge Uno mode, which is an 'extreme version' of the game which flips the rules a little: this time you get points for the cards you have left when someone wins, and once you hit a certain points total you're out of the game. ■

FACT

Although the game supports play on the original Game Boy, that version has no Link Cable support, no in-game animations and no Swap Hands card. And no colour, obviously.

V-RALLY: CHAMPIONSHIP EDITION

Year 1999
Publisher Infogrames
Developer Bit Managers



THE ORIGINAL GAME Boy port of V-Rally was only released in Europe, meaning North American players missed out on one of the best racing games on the handheld. With this Game Boy Color release, that wrong was righted, and this time North American players were able to get their hands on it under the name V-Rally: Edition '99. Despite the year implying some sort of update, in reality this is practically identical to the Game Boy version with the obvious addition of colour. There is one other difference: although the game still only has four cars to choose from, the Ford Escort WRC now has special V-Rally livery on it. I know, I know, this is truly the best timeline. ■

FACT

The Corsica stage in the European version is called Yosemite Park in the North American version. I suppose they're basically the same place, after all.

VEGAS GAMES

Year 2000
Publisher The 3DO Company
Developer Digital Eclipse

THIS BOOK HAS already detailed a number of casino games on both the Game Boy and Game Boy Color, and you can now add Vegas Games to that list. The game is set in a fictional casino, inventively called the Vegas Games Casino, and after registering your name, you start off with $5,000 and have to try to turn that into as much profit as possible. There are technically 20 games on offer here, though some are variations on the same thing: there's Craps, Baccarat, Blackjack, Keno, Video Keno, Money Wheel, Roulette, five types of Video Poker and eight separate slot machines. If you lose all your money, you can go to an ATM and get more: a wonderful life lesson. ■

FACT

The manual calls the Vegas Games casino 'the most glamorous and exciting gambling establishment in cyberspace', which must have been a dated term even then.

VIGILANTE 8

Year 1999
Publisher Vatical Entertainment
Developer Vicarious Visions

THE US IS on the verge of an economic collapse due to a worldwide oil shortage, but is unwilling to bow to the pricefixing shenanigans of OMAR, a multinational oil consortium. OMAR contacts professional terrorist Sid Burn and promises him $100 million if he can bring the US to its knees: meanwhile, a group of civilians called the Vigilantes head out to stop Sid. Much like the console versions of Vigilante 8, this is a vehicular combat game where you drive around, gunning down your opponents. While the console versions have 10 or more stages (depending on the format), the GBC version only has five stages and they don't have destructible elements. Still, the core gameplay is still there, albeit viewed isometrically. ■

FACT

When *EGM* magazine visited Activision to play an early build of the console version, they were told that focus groups liked playing as the school bus. 'Kids love this f***ing bus', they were informed.

V.I.P.

Year	2001
Publisher	Ubisoft
Developer	Planet Interactive

AFTER STARRING IN *Baywatch* for five years, Pamela Anderson decided it was time to move onto something else, and promptly became the lead on V.I.P., a show in which she plays Vallery Irons, the 'most beautiful bodyguard in the world'. In this Game Boy Color tie-in, an actor disappears after being nominated for an award, so it's up to the V.I.P. agency to investigate. The game consists of 14 stages in which you play as various members of the agency, though obviously Vallery gets the lion's share of them. Tasks include rollerblading along the boardwalk (twice, no less), driving a sports car at high speed and a couple of stages where you actually get to shoot bad guys. ■

FACT

The first season of the show had a gimmick where most episodes opened with V.I.P. agents protecting real celebrities, including Jay Leno, Jerry Springer and Stone Cold Steve Austin.

LES VISITEURS

Year	1999
Publisher	Ubisoft
Developer	Gaumont Multimedia

ORIGINALLY RELEASED IN 1993, *Les Visiteurs* (The Visitors) was a French comedy film about a knight and his squire from the year 1123 who ask a wizard to send them back in time a few days but are instead accidentally sent to the year 1992. This Game Boy Color tie-in lets you control the knight Godefroy (played in the film by Jean Reno) and his squire Jacquouille (played by Christian Clavier) in a bythe- numbers platformer. Whereas the film focused solely on the 12th and 20th centuries, the game takes place over five eras in time: 1123, 2000 (to bring the 'present day' section up to date), the French Revolution in 1789, the future in 3001 and the year 100,000 BC. ■

FACT

If *Les Visiteurs* sounds familiar, the film was remade in 2001 as the US comedy *Just Visiting*, and once again starred Reno and Clavier as the knight and his squire.

WACKY RACES

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Infogrames Velez & Dubail

HANNA-BARBERA'S 1968 ANIMATED series was tailor-made for video games (even though they didn't exist at the time), so in 2000 Infogrames used the licence to make racing games for numerous systems. This GBC version opts for a behind-the-car view and pulls it off well despite the limitations of the hardware, offering a reasonable imitation of a 16-bit karting game as you race through nine locations across America, firing weapons along the way. At first you can only play as four racers: the Slag Brothers, the Ant Hill Mob, Penelope Pitstop and Rufus Ruffcut and Sawtooth. By winning cups, however, you can also unlock the Red Max, Peter Perfect, Sergeant Blast and, of course, Dastardly and Muttley, bringing the total roster up to eight. ■

FACT

Lazy Luke isn't playable, even though he's one of just four drivers in the show who won four separate races (along with the Ant Hill Mob, Penelope Pitstop and Peter Perfect).

WALT DISNEY WORLD QUEST: MAGICAL RACING TOUR

Year 2000
Publisher Activision / Eidos
Developer Prolific

WHEN CHIP AND Dale mess around with the Fireworks Machine at Walt Disney World one night, it explodes, scattering its parts all over the park. It's up to Chip and Dale – and a bunch of other characters who had never been seen before and have never been seen since, for some reason – to race around the park and collect all the pieces so that everything's up and running again. There are 10 Disney World attractions to race around, including Space Mountain, the Haunted Mansion, Pirates of the Caribbean, Big Thunder Mountain and the Rock 'n' Roller Coaster. It's oddly handled for a racing game: the 'tracks' continuously move from left to right, and you simply move up and down to avoid walls and obstacles. ■

FACT

Jiminy Cricket is one of the unlockable characters in the game, bringing the total roster to three known characters (him, Chip and Dale) and 10 completely original unknowns.

WARLOCKED

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Nintendo Bits Studios

ONE OF THE more ambitious titles for the Game Boy Color, and also one of the most complicated, Warlocked is a real-time strategy game that borrows liberally from Warcraft. The game tells the story of an ongoing rivalry between the humans (led by Queen Azarel) and the beasts (led by Chief Zog), which is just about to become an all-out war. You can play as either faction, each of which has its own campaign. The aim, as in most early RTS games, is to gather resources and build structures while increasing and improving your army. Each stage also has a hidden wizard, who can be recruited to your army. There are nearly 30 wizards in the game, each with their own useful abilities, but once they die they're gone for good.

FACT

Bits Studios started work on a sequel for the GBA which was simply called Wizards. It was going to have a four-player mode but Bits couldn't find a publisher so it was scrapped.

WARIO LAND II

Year 1999
Publisher Nintendo
Developer Nintendo

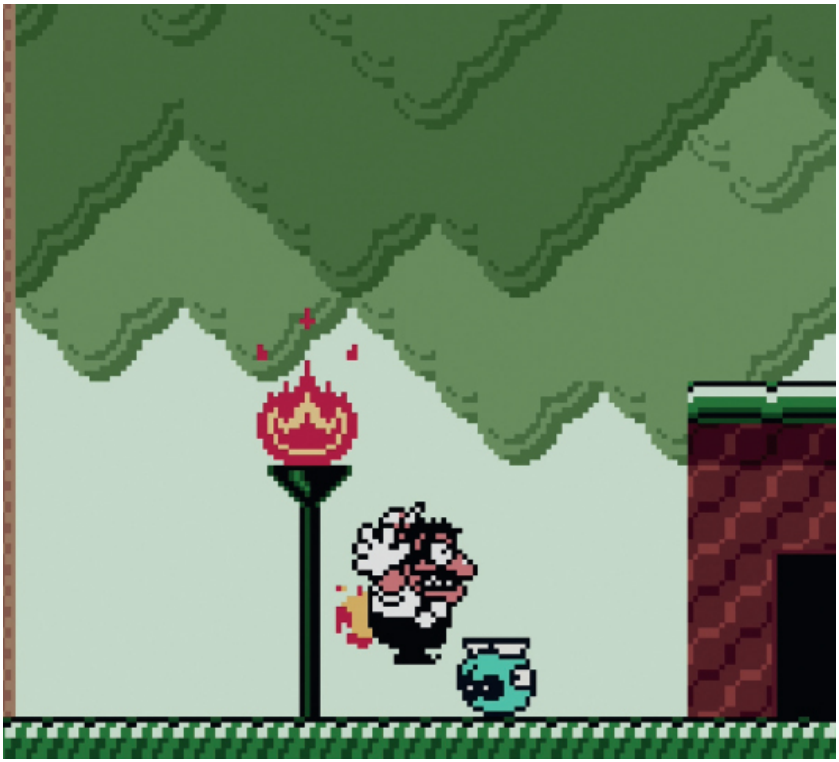
WHEN WARIO LAND II was released on the original Game Boy, it didn't come to Japan. Instead, when the Game Boy Color was released seven months later Japan got a colourised version as a launch title, making it a 'new' game for Japanese players rather than a re-release. A few months later, the GBC version was brought to the west too, allowing everyone to get in on the action in full colour. Whereas the GBC ports of titles like Tetris and The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening sported a DX in their title to denote that they were deluxe versions with new content, there's a reason why this isn't called Wario Land II DX: there are no additions here, other than colour. ■

FACT

Although the GBC version works on a regular Game Boy, the save files are incompatible. If you save your game on one system then want to continue on the other, you have to erase the save data.

WARIO LAND 3

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Nintendo Nintendo



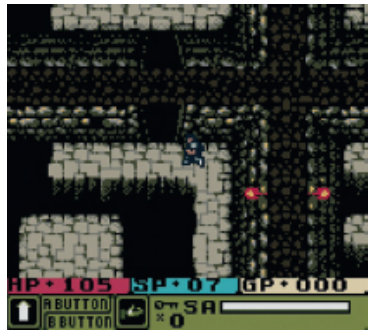
WHILE IT WAS all well and good getting a colour version of Wario Land II, for western players who'd already played through it on the original Game Boy it was simply a case of retreading old ground (even though it was visually appealing ground). It would be another two years after the original release of Wario Land II before players would be able to take on a truly new adventure as Mario's arch-rival. Wario Land 3 opens with Wario flying his plane when suddenly the engine stops working and he crashes into the woods. Wandering through the forest wondering what to do, he stumbles on a cave, inside which he finds a mysterious music box. When he picks the box up and uses it, he's suddenly shrunk down and transported inside it, where he meets a mysterious figure. The figure tells him that an 'evil being' has taken over the music box and sealed his powers in five smaller ones, and that if Wario can collect those boxes and return them, he'll be sent back to the real

FACT

One of the treasures, the Pocket Pet, does absolutely nothing. It looks exactly like the Pokémon Pikachu, a small virtual pet and pedometer released in 1998. world along with any of the treasure he found along the way. Wario Land 3 is mostly similar to its predecessor, with a couple of new power-ups, but the game's main new feature is the 100 treasures which can be collected. Each of these does something – whether it's unlocking a new stage or giving Wario a new ability – and end up making the game something of a Metroidvania, as some stages have areas that can only be reached once new powers are unlocked. ■

WARRIORS OF MIGHT AND MAGIC

Year 2000
Publisher The 3DO Company
Developer Climax Studios



WHEN YOUNG ALLERON witnessed Ragloth and his army causing destruction in his homeland, he swore that when he was older he would fight back. Fast forward a few years later and a now grownup Alleron hasn't quite pulled it off, and is sitting in Ragloth's dungeon. Suddenly, he hears fighting in one of the floors above him, so he breaks out of his cell and thus begins his adventure. the GBC version of Warriors of Might and Magic is completely different from the PS1 and PS2 games and has you making your way through the world, upgrading your weapons, armour and shield along the way. The game was criticised for its slow combat and its numerous bottomless pits, which were too easy to fall into and die instantly. ■

FACT

Alleron wears a mask in the game, but it's because of the events of the other versions, which have a different plot. The mask is a punishment for crimes he's been falsely accused of.

WCW MAYHEM

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Electronic Arts 2N Productions

THQ HAD RELEASED some great WCW games for the Nintendo 64, but when it got the WWF licence, WCW decided to find a different publisher. Step forward EA, and its debut WCW offering, Mayhem. The GBC version features 12 wrestlers: Goldberg, Sting, Hollywood Hogan, Buff Bagwell, Ric Flair, Bam Bam Bigelow, Booker T, Lex Luger, Randy Savage, Kevin Nash, DDP and Bret Hart. The console versions of the game were unique for being the first wrestling games (in the west, at least) to let wrestlers go backstage and continue fighting there, and the GBC version replicates this, allowing you to fight in the locker room (complete with a black-andwhite security camera style display) and an alleyway. ■

FACT

The game's main mode, Quest for the Best, was criticised for making the player win 12 matches in a row, which on a Game Boy Color with no password feature was a heavy duty ask.

WENDY: DER TRAUM VON ARIZONA

Year Publisher Developer 2002 Kiddinx Kiddinx

WENDY IS A German horse magazine for children, which started in 1986. Its main selling point is a comic starring the titular Wendy, a girl who enjoys going on adventures with her horse. In this GBC adaptation, Wendy and her friend Bianca want to travel to Arizona to go on a riding holiday, but they don't have the money (they must not get royalties from the mag) so they decide to take part in a series of horse tournaments to earn it. The game is split between exploration stages (where you wander around, taking on tasks and being attacked by pretty much any farm animal that walks past you), and the actual tournaments. If you reach the end, you have to drive the taxi to the airport. ■

FACT

A CGI cartoon series based on *Wendy* was produced in 2013 and dubbed in both German and English, but it only lasted a single 25-

episode season until it was turned to glue.

WENDY: EVERY WITCH WAY

Year 2001
Publisher TDK Mediactive
Developer WayForward

AFTER RELEASING ITS two technically sound Sabrina platformers, developer WayForward followed up with another licensed game about a witch: Wendy the Good Little Witch from the *Casper the Friendly Ghost* comics. When Wendy goes into her aunt's attic, she finds a treasure chest containing magical Moon Stones. As she does this, a giant castle lands on her house. It's the Moon Stone Castle, and messing with the Moon Stones turned their gravity upsidedown. Wendy has to explore the castle's halls, gardens, dungeons and towers to find the stones and restore gravity. Conveniently, this also leads to the game's main gimmick: Wendy can reverse gravity at will and walk on the ceiling instead, leading to some fun puzzles similar to 2010 indie gem VVVVVV. ■

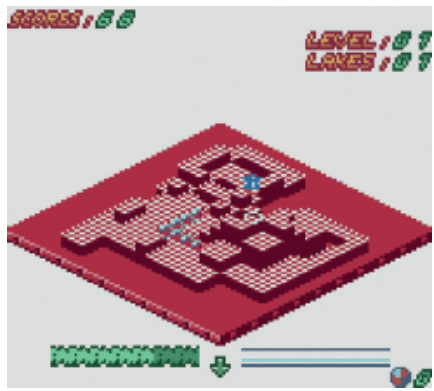
FACT

Much like WayForward's next release Shantae, playing the game in a GBA unlocks extra features: in this case, a new world with three extra

stages.

WETRIX GB

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Infogrames Zed Two



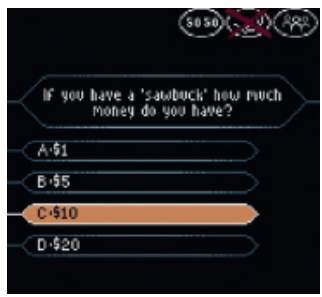
THE RIGHTS FOR Wetrix were co-owned by publisher Ocean and co-creators the Pickford brothers. Following the game's release on the N64, however, Ocean – according to Ste Pickford – did a deal behind their backs to have a GBC port made. The result was the weakest version of the game. Like its N64 source material, the aim is to drop Uppers and Downers onto a piece of land, to raise and lower it respectively, in order to make enclosures that hold water when it falls. Ice can freeze the water and fire can evaporate it, but if any falls off the stage the player risks getting Game Over. the GBC version's low resolution and use of sprites for the water make it difficult to tell what's going on. ■

FACT

Ste Pickford called the GBC version 'atrocious'. After an argument, Ocean kept the handheld rights and the Pickfords got the console rights, leading to a Dreamcast port and PS2 sequel.

WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE: 2ND EDITION

Year 2000
Publisher THQ
Developer Valleycrest Productions



ALTHOUGH VIDEO GAME versions of *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire* were released in numerous regions, the GBC version was only released in North America, meaning you're stuck with Regis Philbin as the host. As in the show, you have to answer 15 questions in a row in order to win $1 million. Unlike the show, however, you only have 30 seconds to answer each question, and if you choose a lifeline you'll only have 15 seconds after that. And if you're thinking 'that's fine, I'll just look it up online', remember this was released in the era before fast internet, smartphones and Wikipedia, so good luck looking up the answer in time on a 56kit/s modem. ■

FACT

The game ends with Regis calling you 'a fake millionaire', adding: 'What did you really expect? I can't hand out a million dollars to every person lucky enough to answer 15 questions in a row.'

THE WILD THORNBERRYS: RAMBLER

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Mattel Interactive
Vicarious Visions

BASED ON THE Nickelodeon animated series *The Wild Thornberrys*, Rambler consists of six separate mini-games, each starring a different member of the family. 12-year-old Eliza has to rescue animals from cages in the Galapagos Islands. Pet chimp Darwin has to recover pieces of Marianne's video camera, which have been stolen by marmosets. Adopted feral 4-year-old Donnie has to find and eat beetles while avoiding dangerous animals. 16-yearold Debbie has to gather her CD collection after a storm scatters the discs. Marianne has to get a photo of the Yeti in the Himalayas. And finally, Nigel has to drop down on a rope into a ravine to retrieve some lost video tapes. There's also a two-player board game mode.

FACT

2003 movie *Rugrats Go Wild* saw the characters from *Rugrats* and *The Wild Thornberrys* meeting up. It also marked the end of both series, with no further episodes or movies for either.

WINGS OF FURY

Year Publisher Developer 1999 Red Orb Entertainment
Magnin & Associates

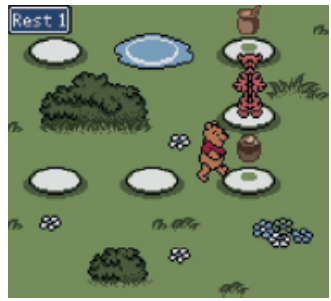
ORIGINALLY RELEASED ON the Apple II in 1987, this visually enhanced Game Boy Color port still follows the same concept. It's set over the Pacific Ocean in 1945, during the final days of World War II, and has you flying an F6F Hellcat as you escort your damaged aircraft carrier back to safe waters. There are 15 missions in the game, and in each you have to take on enemies with machine guns, bombs, rockets and torpedoes. The game can be quite fast-paced, meaning it can take some time to get used to turning back to hit enemies you've passed, since often they've scrolled off the screen before you can even react to them. ■

FACT

A version of the game was released for the X68000 computer in Japan. This version switches the sides and has you attacking Americans in a Japanese A6M Zero fighter.

WINNIE THE POOH: ADVENTURES IN THE 100 ACRE WOOD

Year Publisher Developer 2000 NewKidCo Tose



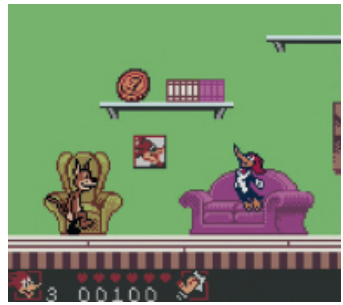
IF YOU'RE EXPECTING a plot worthy of A.A. Milne's finest in this one your expectations may be a little high: the only real story here is that Pooh has decided to walk through the 100 Acre Wood, meeting his friends along the way. The game is played in a board game style, moving from space to space and taking on mini-games. Because it's aimed at very young kids, you're rewarded with a storybook for each mini-game whether you win or lose. These storybooks are based on Winnie the Pooh movies, and once you collect all eight you can visit Christopher Robin, who will be delighted at your literature scavenging abilities and reward you with a final book based on the *The Tigger Movie*. ■

FACT

The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh, the most popular Disney Pooh movie, actually consists of three short films that had previously been shown before live-action Disney films.

WOODY WOODPECKER

Year Publisher Developer 2001 DreamCatcher Interactive / Cryo Planet Interactive



WOODY WOODPECKER'S NIECE and nephew have gone missing. After leaving the Woodpecker home, Knothead and Splinter – why would you name them after things that would annoy woodpeckers? – have been kidnapped by the nasty Buzz Buzzard, so it's up to their heroic uncle Woody to save the day. This GBC platformer accompanies a PS2 game – which was subtitled Escape from Buzz Buzzard Park, leading to this version often being wrongly given the same title online – and goes down the similar '3D on console, 2D on handheld' route. Woody has to make his way through 15 stages, including such diverse locations as a mountain ski resort, a Mexican village and a haunted castle while taking on Wally Walrus, Dapper Denver Dooley and other rivals from Woody Woodpecker cartoons.

FACT

At the end of the game, Woody sits down to watch TV and is informed by the kids that the reason they left the house in the first place was to get batteries for the remote.

WOODY WOODPECKER RACING

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Konami Konami

DESPITE THE NUMEROUS racing games on the Game Boy Color, karting games are few and far between. Of those that did make it onto the handheld, Woody Woodpecker Racing was one of the more wellreceived offerings. There are 10 characters in the game: you start with Woody, Winnie, Knothead, Splinter, Wally Walrus and Smedley, while you can unlock Buzz Buzzard, Ms Meany, Dappy Denver Dooley and Chilly Willy. Due to the game's zoomed out visuals, each simply appears as a wee head sticking out of a kart, which is rather adorable. The list of features is impressive for a Game Boy Color racing game, including a battery back-up, the ability to unlock parts and the option to transfer ghost laps to another person's copy. ■

FACT

The game was due for release on the Dreamcast but was cancelled. Just one month before this book was finished (in November 2023), a prototype was shared online.

WORLD DESTRUCTION LEAGUE: THUNDER TANKS

Year 2000
Publisher The 3DO Company
Developer Sunset Entertainment

IN A DYSTOPIAN future (is there any other kind in video games?), the most popular form of entertainment is the World Destruction League, a sort of Gladiators with explosions and death. One of the highest rated shows is Thunder Tanks, in which contestants fight to the death in enormous tanks. Each of the 12 playable characters has their own tank with different abilities: vampire chap Bloodhound, for example, drives a modified WWI-era tank with jumping jets added. Battles are played from an overhead perspective, and take place in arenas that are more destructible than you'd see in most other Game Boy Color games. Though I suppose when Destruction is one of the words in the title, it probably goes without saying. ■

FACT

A second WDL game, WarJetz, was released on PS2 in 2001 and swaps the tanks for fighter jets.

WORMS: ARMAGEDDON

Year 2000
Publisher Infogrames
Developer Infogrames

THE THIRD GAME in the Worms series plays like its predecessors: it's a turn-based combat game where you take control of a team of four worms and have to kill all the other teams to win. When it's your turn, you get to move one of your worms for a limited time, positioning them in place to fire a weapon of choice at their opponents in an attempt to drain their energy to zero. While other versions of the game feature up to 60 different types of weapon and tool, the Game Boy Color version only has 14, meaning the handheld version is obviously far more limited in terms of tactical possibilities (though it is easier to learn your entire arsenal as a result). ■

FACT

When the game was originally announced, its title was Wormageddon. This was changed to avoid confusion with the game Carmageddon.

WWF ATTITUDE

Year	1999
Publisher	Acclaim
Developer	Crawfish Interactive

SINCE THE GAME Boy got a port of Acclaim's WWF War Zone, it was only sporting (well, sports entertainment) that the Game Boy Color should get a port of its sequel. The handheld version of WWF Attitude has a healthy roster of 20 superstars: Stone Cold Steve Austin, The Rock, Mankind, the Undertaker, Triple H, Sable, Kane, X-Pac, Road Dogg, Billy Gunn, Al Snow, Edge, Gangrel, Ken Shamrock, Val Venis, The Big Boss Man, Goldust, Jeff Jarrett, the Godfather and Taka Michinoku. Sadly, the game's moveset isn't as diverse as its roster, with every wrestler having the same small handful of moves and their own unique finisher being the only thing that distinguishes them. ■

FACT

The console versions put in tribute notices to Owen Hart, who was in the game but had died shortly before release. By the time the GBC version arrived, both Hart and his tribute had been removed.

WWF BETRAYAL

Year 2001
Publisher THQ
Developer WayForward

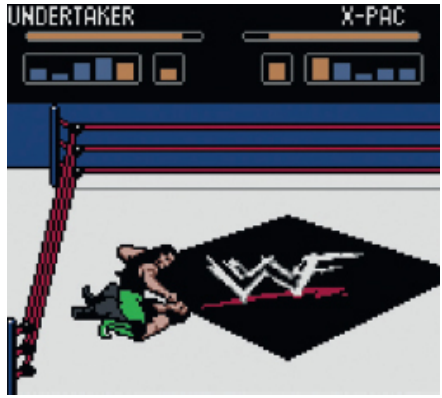
STEPHANIE MCMAHON HAS been kidnapped, so her old man Vince calls on one of the WWF's top stars and offers them a WWF Championship title shot if they can rescue her. Playing as either Stone Cold Steve Austin, The Rock, Triple H or The Undertaker, you then embark on something that's never happened again since: a Final Fight style beat 'em up starring WWF characters. Starting at an empty arena, you have to fight your way through referees, construction workers, thugs and cops on your way to the WWF HQ at Titan Towers, where you learn that the true 'Betrayal' was aimed at your character all along. Every beat 'em up trope is in here, from the subway stage to the elevator section. ■

FACT

When WayForward started work on the game it didn't know which wrestlers would star, so it made a generic 'Naked Man' character and just put the appropriate clothes on the sprite later on.

WWF WRESTLEMANIA 2000

Year Publisher Developer 1999 THQ Natsume



THE N64 VERSION of WrestleMania 2000 is considered one of the greatest wrestling games ever made, with its successor WWF No Mercy being among the few that ever bettered it. Naturally, the Game Boy Color version could never live up to that, but does at least offer one or two surprises. There are 16 wrestlers here: Austin, the Rock, Ken Shamrock, Val Venis, Jeff Jarrett, Billy Gunn, X-Pac, the Big Show, Triple H, Shawn Michaels, Vince McMahon, the Undertaker, Kane, the Big Boss Man, Road Dogg and Mankind. The game's main mode is Championship, which actually has a story with cutscenes and dialogue (for the first time in a handheld WWF game) as you try to win both the IC and Heavyweight titles. ■

FACT

All the edgy 'Attitude era' content has been censored, meaning Vince McMahon calls you a 'son of a xxxxx' during the Championship mode.

X-MEN: MUTANT ACADEMY

Year	2000
Publisher	Activision
Developer	Crawfish Interactive

RELEASED TO TIE in with the first X-Men movie, this is a one-onone fighting game which features more villains than heroes for some reason. Initially starting with nine fighters, completing the game's Story mode (which doesn't really have a story) will bring the full roster to 11, comprising of five X-Men (Cyclops, Wolverine, Storm, Gambit and Phoenix) and six villains (Toad, Mystique, Magneto, Sabretooth, Pyro and Apocalypse). It accompanied a PS1 fighting game, but because that version used a full array of six attack buttons the Game Boy Color version feels rather limited by comparison, especially because reviews at the time criticised its sluggish controls and what felt like input delay when pulling off moves. ■

FACT

A Nintendo 64 version of the game was in development, with some very early screenshots appearing in various N64 magazines. It was cancelled, along with a separate X-Men beat 'em up.

X-MEN: MUTANT WARS

Year Publisher Developer 2000 Activision Avit

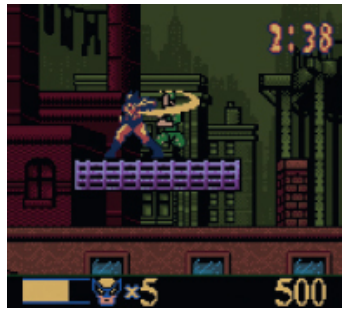
A BUNCH OF cyborgs are causing destruction all over the place, and the X-Men think Magneto may be behind it. Mutant Wars is a side-scrolling action game in which you fight your way through nine stages of enemies – including woodlands in Canada, a graveyard, New York City, Washington D.C. and Apocalypse's base – defeating bosses along the way and collecting the keys to unlock each stage. Although you initially start off as Wolverine, you can quickly switch to Iceman, Gambit, Cyclops or Storm at any time by holding the Select button and pressing a direction. Each character has their own health bar, so regularly swapping them out as they get weaker ensures you can keep a full squad for longer. ■

FACT

The game's music was composed by Kazuo Sawa, who composed most of the music in the Kunio-kun (aka River City Ransom) series.

X-MEN: WOLVERINE'S RAGE

Year 2001
Publisher Activision
Developer Digital Eclipse



WOLVERINE IS ABSOLUTELY raging (hence the title). He's found out that Lady Deathstrike has discovered plans for a molecular destabiliser, and once she gets it up and running she'll be able to use it to turn his virtually indestructible adamantium skeleton into liquid (which, if I recall from my chemistry lessons, is noticeably less solid). Off pops Wolverine, then, to find Deathstrike and pop his claws into her rump before she gets the chance to make her machine. The game consists of 20 stages, including boss fights with Cyber, Sabretooth and Lady Deathstrike herself. Although the action itself is straightforward, the fact that Wolverine can stop and regain his health (true to his character) was a novelty at the time. ■

FACT

Lady Deathstrike made her first appearance in an issue of *Daredevil* in 1983, under her real name Yuriko Oyama. She didn't get her Lady Deathstrike name until three years later.

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

Year Publisher Developer	2001 Titus Software Titus Software

MUCH LIKE THE Game Boy Color game based on *Hercules*, this is a Zelda-like action adventure game. It's set in a dream world called Psychosia, where Xena has been placed by her former lieutenant and general nasty chap Darphus. Xena has to find Morpheus (the mythological Greek god of sleep, not the Matrix character who was named after him), because he may be able to help her return to the real world. Initially unarmed, Xena collects her sword almost right away, which is handy because she's attacked by everything (including chickens) from the start. If you also have the Hercules GBC game you can link up the Xena one with it, letting you play as Hercules in the Xena game and vice versa. ■

FACT

Xena was a spin-off of *Hercules*. She first appeared as a villain in that show but her popularity led to a new series in which she was a hero instead.

XTREME SPORTS

Year 2000
Publisher Infogrames
Developer WayForward

ANOTHER HIGHLY POLISHED release by eventual Shantae developer WayForward, Xtreme Sports is part sports game, part RPG. Playing as either Guppi or her boyfriend Fin, the game opens with you visiting Xtreme Island and signing up to try to become the Xtreme Sports Champion. There are five disciplines here – skateboarding, street luge, in-line skating, surfing and skyboarding – and you have to perform well enough in each of them to win the tournament, while at the same time exploring the island and discovering the secrets of the shady Bone-Heads gang. If you fancy getting your hands on it, it's a little easier than other GBC games: it was re-released as a digital $10 Switch game in 2023. ■

FACT

Press Left x5, Up x5, Right x5, Down x5, Select x5 on the title screen to unlock a debug menu, which also contains a Scrapbook of concept art narrated by Guppi.

XTREME WHEELS

Year Publisher Developer

2000 Bam! Entertainment / Bergsala Spike

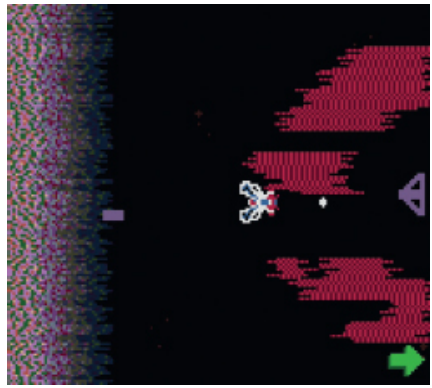
XTREME WHEELS FEELS a little like what you'd get if you took Nintendo's NES classic Excitebike and swapped out the motorbikes for BMX. The game's main gimmick was also the most contentious one among critics: there's a stamina bar which drops quickly as you pedal your bike. While you can slowly recharge it if you stop pedalling, it's initially very slow to do so (until you unlock better racers), and if your stamina runs out entirely you have to wait a while until your rider catches their breath. This divisive feature aside, the game boasts 20 courses and a lengthy Grand Prix mode where players take on four separate championships. ■

FACT

Publisher BAM! Entertainment was originally founded in 1999 as Bay Area Multimedia, and went bankrupt just six years later.

YARS' REVENGE

Year 1999
Publisher Telegames
Developer Telegames



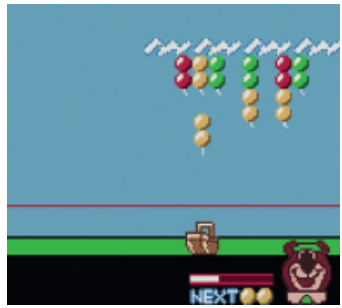
RETRO GAMES AREN'T just a modern thing: by the time Yars' Revenge was released on the Game Boy Color the original Atari 2600 release was already 17 years old. This version doesn't change an awful lot, and while it's certainly a visual upgrade it's not a massive one considering what the GBC is capable of. As in the original, you play as a little bug called a Yar (not a Yars, as the manual suggests) and you have to destroy the Qotile, which is on the other side of a barrier. To destroy it, you have to collect parts of the Qotile's banner or touch the Qotile itself, either of which charges your Zorlon Cannon. Look, it was made in 1982, when sci-fi gobbledygook was acceptable. ■

FACT

The Atari version was programmed by Howard Scott Warshaw, who was chosen to develop the E.T. game for the Atari 2600, meaning he's responsible for one of the best and worst 2600 games.

YOGI BEAR: GREAT BALLOON BLAST

Year 2000
Publisher Bam! Entertainment
Developer ITL



EVERY TIME THE Jellystone Park Balloon Fest kicks off, Yogi Bear is delighted. A big event means lots of people having picnics, meaning lots of picnic baskets to steal. Yogi, his chum Boo Boo and his love interest Cindy hatch a plan to disguise themselves as balloon salesmen in an attempt to get their hands on the baskets. All this is a needlessly elaborate plot for what is actually a North American reskin of puzzle game Pop'n Pop (see earlier in this section) with the Taito characters replaced with Yogi and his chums. As such, the gameplay is practically identical, offering a cross between Space Invaders and Puzzle Bobble, with bubbles that move left to right and your bubble gun only able to fire upwards. ■

FACT

Hidden in the game's code are sprites for Dexter and Dee Dee from Dexter's Laboratory. It's not clear if they were supposed to be unlockable, or part of a planned tie-in that became the Yogi game.

YU-GI-OH! DARK DUEL STORIES

Year 2002
Publisher Konami
Developer Konami

THIS IS ACTUALLY the third game in the Yu-Gi-Oh! Duel Monster series on Game Boy (in Japan it's called Yu-Gi- Oh! Duel Monsters III), but the first to be released in the west. Based on the *Yu-Gi-Oh* manga and anime, Dark Duel Stories is a card-based battling game, similar to the main Yu-Gi-Oh! card game but with different, simpler rules. The aim of the game's main Campaign mode is to make your way through each location, duelling with the other card players you find. Beating each one gives you a new card, allowing you to build your deck and prepare for the final challenge against the Rulers of the Heavens, who hold the fabled Millennium Items. You can also combine card tops and bottoms to make new cards. ■

FACT

There were eight games in the Duel Monsters series. The last one, Yu-Gi-Oh! Reshef of Destruction, was released on the Game Boy Advance in 2003.

ZEBCO FISHING!

Year Publisher Developer

1999 Vatical Entertainment
Vicarious Visions

TIME FOR ONE more fishing game before we end this book. Zebco Fishing! takes place over the fictional Chestnut Lake and Drake Lake, and plays like your typical fishing game except for the presence of the elusive 'Lochness Bass', known as Nessie, which weighs 21 lbs and has never been caught. As well as built-in rumble in the cartridges, Zebco Fishing! does also have at least one interesting feature that separates it from other fishing games. Blackjack Bass is a special mode that plays like the casino game: you start with 0 lbs of fish and have to get as close as you can to catching 21 lbs without going over. Of course, if you catch Nessie first you instantly win.

FACT

Global angling equipment manufacturer Zebco started in 1932 as the Zero Hour Bomb Company, specialising in making time bombs for oil drilling. That's one way to clear a lake of fish.

ZIDANE: FOOTBALL GENERATION

Year	2002
Publisher	Cryo Interactive
Developer	Aqua Pacific

AS THE NAME suggests, this football game makes use of French superstar Zinedine Zidane, although because it doesn't actually have any player names he's not explicitly named in the game: instead he just appears in little images when it's half-time, a goal is scored and so on. The game features a mere 16 international teams to choose from (including France, of course), and offers three modes: Exhibition, Arcade (defeat them in order) and Tournament. One neat feature is the ability to switch between sidescrolling, vertically-scrolling and isometric viewpoints at the touch of the Select button, though some work better than others: passing seems completely broken in the horizontal view but feels fine when playing vertically.

FACT

At regular intervals a chiptune version of Dario G's football anthem 'Carnaval de Paris' plays. I think it's supposed to be the crowd singing it but it just sounds like a normal tune.

ZOBOOMAFOO: PLAYTIME IN ZOBOOLAND

Year 2001
Publisher Encore Software
Developer Vicarious Visions

ZOBOOMAFOO WAS A children's TV show that aired on PBS between 1999 and 2001 and starred the titular Zoboomafoo, a talking fiveyear- old lemur (it was a puppet, don't worry). This video game tie-in has you playing as said lemur as he tries to find his animal cards, which have been scattered all over Zobooland. The game is a basic platformer in which players explore eight stages, each containing a different animal card, while collecting berries to top up your energy bar to avoid falling asleep (because some lemurs sleep up to 17 hours a day, kids). Naturally, given the very young target audience, the platforming gameplay here isn't going to trouble anyone old enough to be able to actually pronounce the thing's name. ■

FACT

In the show Zoboomafoo was sometimes played by a lemur called Jovian, who died in 2014. Which is quite a morbid way to finish the book, I suppose. Sorry.